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HISTORY OF ROME

AND

THE ROMAN PEOPLE.

SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS.
(From Prince Torlonia's Gallery.)

HISTORY OF ROME

AND

THE ROMAN PEOPLE,

FROM ITS ORIGIN TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN EMPIRE,

BY

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AND COMPILED AND ARRANGED BY KELLY & CO.

ILLUSTRATED WITH ABOUT 2500 ENGRAVINGS, 100 MAPS AND PLANS, AND NUMEROUS CHROMO-LITHOGRAPHS.

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VOLUME VI.—PART I.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF COMMODUS TO THE DEATH OF PHILIP.

WITH 255 WOOD ENGRAVINGS, MAP, AND 3 CHROMO-LITHOGRAPHS.

LONDON:

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

1886.

PRINTED BY KELLY & CO., GATE STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, W.C., AND KINGSTON-ON-THAMES.

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PREFACE TO VOLUME VI.

In bringing this long labour to a close, I am bound to mention specially the care and ability of the translators, Mr. Clarke and Miss Ripley, who have become so expert in their work as to relieve me of most of an editor's trouble. For in this volume I felt it undesirable to curtail the French text, as has been done to some extent in Volume V. The general index, which was begun as a translation, very soon assumed an independent character, and will be found adequate for all practical purposes; indeed, to catalogue every minute fact or solitary name in so large a book would require an additional volume of print. The work is already voluminous enough, and the publishers are agreed with me that the death of Diocletian is the proper halting-place, as pagan Rome may be said to have no history after that date. The life of Julian is a retrograde step in Christian Rome rather than a survival of paganism. We therefore send this work into the world to take its place as the most complete Roman History yet published in the English tongue, and not likely to be superseded in our day.

J. P. MAHAFFY.

Trinity College, Dublin.
August, 1886.

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ELEVENTH PERIOD.

THE AFRICAN AND SYRIAN PRINCES (180–235 A.D.).

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

COMMODUS, PERTINAX, DIDIUS JULIANUS, AND THE WARS OF SEVERUS (180–211 A.D.).

I.—Commodus (180–192).

THE 31st of August was a day doubly unlucky for the Empire: it was the birthday of Caligula and of Commodus. In the 210 years that Rome had had emperors, the latter was the first "born in the purple," *porphyrogenitus*;[1] but his reign was not of a character to recommend to the Romans the principle of hereditary succession. He was not yet nineteen when Marcus Aurelius died.[2] His father had given him the best of masters, but an ungrateful nature rendered their cares fruitless, for instance, at the age of twelve, finding his bath insufficiently heated, he ordered the servant who had charge of it to be thrown into the furnace. The absolute power which he inherited at so early an age completed his ruin, for those whom an old author calls "the court instructors"[3] quickly

[1] Born, that is to say, during the reign of his father. The title of this chapter must not be taken strictly. Commodus, Pertinax, and Julianus are neither African nor Syrian. But the former does not deserve being ranked with the Antonines, and the two latter, who reigned so short a time, are connected by their history with the first African emperor.

[2] Marcus Lucius Ælius Aurelius Commodus Antoninus was born August 31st, 161, and succeeded Marcus Aurelius on the 17th of March, 180. For the history of his reign we have only the shapeless abridgment of Dion by Xiphilin (book lxxii.), the first book of Herodian, which is that of a rhetorician, and the confused biography of Lampridius.

[3] . . . . *qui in aula institutores habentur* (Lamp., *Comm.*, 1). Dion, who knew him

obtained control over this feeble intellect. His bust and medals represent him with the stupid look of a man whose mind has never been crossed by one worthy thought.[1] Combining as he did timidity and cruelty, he exhibited the latter trait as soon as, by a word or a look, he was able to rid himself of those who caused him alarm.

The imperial power was not hereditary, but the emperors had always wished to make it so, and, in the absence of any great institutions of government, this was inevitable. The sons of the emperors in their cradles were surrounded [as they now are] with titles and honours, one or two of which would have been, to a citizen, the reward of a long life of public services. At the age of five Commodus was made Cæsar; at the age of fourteen, member of all the sacred colleges and *princeps juventutis*, although he had not yet assumed the toga; at sixteen he was consul, imperator, and invested with the tribunitian power.[2] That is to say, he had all the imperial titles with the exception of that of Augustus, the sign of the supreme rank, and of Pontifex Maximus, which also could not at that time be shared. Marcus Aurelius associated his son with himself in the triumph over the Germans, and took him in 178 upon the expedition against the Marcomanni. The rumour was current that the imperial sage had been aided "in restoring to nature the elements which she had lent him." Dion Cassius accuses the physicians of Marcus Aurelius of having poisoned him at the instigation of Commodus; but Dion was a contemporary, and contemporaries have their ears ever open to all kinds of calumnies. Two winters passed in an inclement climate were dangerous for this man of the South, whose enfeebled constitution made him old and infirm at the age of fifty-nine. If we add to this the cares of an important war, and the plague supervening, we are not compelled to charge Commodus with parricide, whose account, moreover, is long enough without this addition. It is worthy of mention that

well, says of him, however (lxxii. 3), that he was not an evil-disposed person, but extremely timid, and so simple-minded that he became the slave of those who surrounded him.

[1] See the two busts represented in vol. x. pp. 203, 206.

[2] According to the inscription on his tomb, he held, at the close of the year 192, for the eighteenth time, the office of tribune. (Orelli, No. 887.) He had been made tribune for the first time on the 23rd of December, 176. (Cohen, *Méd. impér.*). Lampridius says that in 183 he assumed the title of Pious, *senatu ridente*, and that of Felix on the death of Perennis in 185.

Commodus. (Statue of Pentelic Marble. Vatican, *Braccio Nuovo*, No. 8.)

the latter dedicated a temple to his father with priests, Antonine flamens, and all that antiquity had prescribed for "consecrations."[1] Later, Commodus did not consider the new divinity of sufficient rank, and preferred to be called the son of Jupiter rather than of Marcus.[2]

Commodus assumed power without opposition. He was advised to profit by the exhausted condition of the barbarians to overthrow them completely. But the young nobles, wearied by these obscure combats in the Pannonian marshes, this dull life in wild camps, under hovels of mud and reeds, reminded him of the marble villas of Tibur, the games of the amphitheatre, and the seductions of the Via Sacra; and the young emperor became eager to go back to Rome, to enjoy his palaces, his wealth, and his sovereign authority. He waited, however, until his father's old generals had renewed the treaty which Marcus Aurelius had already imposed upon the barbarians.[3] The Marcomanni and the Quadi engaged not to approach nearer the Danube than twenty stadia, to give up their arms, their auxiliaries,[4] their captives, the deserters, and a certain quantity of corn, which tax Commodus afterwards remitted. They were forbidden to attack the Iazyges, the Burœ, and the Vandals. They were accustomed to hold markets which were frequented by the Roman traders, but were also the occasion for assemblages of their own people, when plots were concerted and oaths interchanged. These markets they were forbidden to hold more than once a month, in places designated by the Roman authorities; they were watched by centurions, and forts were constructed all along the river to prevent smuggling.[5] A similar treaty was concluded with the Burœ.

The Empire might at this time feel that its sway or its undisputed influence extended through the entire valley of the Danube from the Black Sea to Bohemia, and that the Carpathians, with the mountains of Moravia, would be its secure barrier. But Commodus had relinquished the former right of making annual levies among these warlike tribes, that is to say, of taking away their best

[1] Capit., *Anton. philos.*, 18.
[2] Herod., i. 14.
[3] See vol. v. p. 197.
[4] The Quadi surrendered 13,000; the Marcomanni, not as many.
[5] Desjardins, *Monum. épigr. du musée hongrois*, No. 112.

warriors. Moreover, he gave back to them all the fortresses of which they had been deprived.[1] From the summit of these walls the Romans had held the barbarians in check, and had guaranteed the security of the colonists, who, under the shelter of the Roman

The Empress Crispina. (Bust of the Capitol, Hall of the Emperors, No. 44.)

swords, would have made of these lands another Dacia. But Commodus was not Trajan.[2]

This was the last time he appeared at the head of the troops. Happily the great traditions of war were not yet lost, and there remained to Rome generals like Marcellus, Niger, Pertinax, Albinus, and Septimius Severus, who kept strong watch upon the barbarians.[3]

[1] Dion, lxxii. 2 and 3.

[2] Herodian (i. 15), speaks of large sums of money given to the barbarians to buy peace.

[3] Dion and Lampridius mention some few victories gained over the barbarians of the Danube by Albinus and Niger, in 182 and 184. There were more serious engagements in Britain (184) and in Africa (187–190). Cf. Eckhel, vii. 120 and 123.

He returned to Rome the 22nd of October, 180, surrounded by all triumphal pomp in honour of victories that he had not gained, and instead of placing upon his chariot the image of Marcus Aurelius, the true conqueror, a handsome and favourite slave was seated beside Commodus. Vice returned into the imperial palace, where, in the time of Marcus Aurelius, virtue had dwelt.

Crispina Augusta, Wife of Commodus. (Bronze Medallion.)

Leaving the care of public affairs to Perennis, prefect of the guards,[1] Commodus took no thought save for his pleasures, and a part of the Roman aristocracy did likewise. The preceding emperors had imposed severe morals on the court. Men now made amends for this prolonged restraint, and rushed into all forms of dissipation, like the young French nobles after the hypocritical austerities of the latter years of Louis XIV. The ruler, at the age of ardent passions, propagated around him all the vices which were in himself: lately it had been the fashion to philosophize, now it appeared good taste to practise every kind of profligacy. It is said that the two empresses set the example. One of them, Crispina, the wife of Commodus, was banished to Capri, under a charge of adultery, and afterwards put to death; the other, Lucilla, the daughter of Marcus Aurelius, had retained imperial honours from her marriage with the emperor Verus: at the theatre she sat with the emperor's family, and in the streets the sacred fire was carried before her.[3]

The Empress Lucilla, Daughter of Marcus Aurelius and Wife of Lucius Verus.[2]

[1] Dion, lxxii. 9. According to Herodian, Commodus reigned wisely up to the time of the conspiracy of Lucilla, which is placed in 183. But this is probably a literary reminiscence of Nero's early reign.

[2] From an intaglio in the *Cabinet de France* (red jasper, 12 millim. by 8). The name of Proclus abridged, ΠΡΟΚΛ, is perhaps that of the engraver. Cf. Chabouillet, *op. cit., Supplément*, No. 3,509.

[3] Ammianus Marcellinus and Quintus Curtius say that the kings of Persia possessed a

Her father had compelled her to espouse in second nuptials the old and respectable Pompeianus, whom she, it is said, betrayed, even including her own son-in-law in the number of her lovers. But Lucilla is perhaps one more victim of those calumnies so very current in Rome at that time, according to the testimony of Tertullian who heard them.[1] She must have been nearly forty at this time, an age which, for women of the South, is no longer the period of beauty or of transient amours.

The writers who have preserved to us the history of this reign fill it with monotonous accounts of cruel executions. In the whole period of twelve years is found neither a good measure of government nor a decree for the improvement of laws; nothing which shows any care for the public interest; Commodus did not even finish the constructions which his father had begun. Yet still the Empire stands by its own weight, *mole sua stat.* Traders buy and sell, sailors traverse the seas, labourers do their work, and governors keep watch over the provinces, as though a wise ruler presided over the destinies of the Empire. The treasury still furnishes funds to assist in the reconstruction of Nicomedia, destroyed by an earthquake,[2] to construct a gymnasium at Antioch, diverse monuments at Alexandria, and to establish at Carthage an African fleet, *classis Africana*, in order to make good with African corn the deficiencies in the Egyptian supply brought into Ostia.[3] Lastly, the soldiers still are detailed to aid in public works. Those in Dalmatia restore a bridge over the Cettina that had been destroyed; along the Danube they construct fortified posts to keep out German marauders.[4] If our information were more extensive it

fire which fell from heaven, which they kept alive with care, and had it borne before them on expeditions on little silver altars, surrounded by singing magi. The usage is ancient, for Herodotus makes mention of it. The emperors adopted this oriental custom like many others, and the fire became a symbol of their majesty. The passage of Dion Cassius referred to shows that this custom was already established at the close of the second century.

[1] *Apol.*, 35.

[2] . . . . πολλὰ ἐχαρίσατο (Malalas, *Chronogr.*, xii. p. 289, ed. of Bonn). Antioch had bought in the year 44 from the inhabitants of Elis, for a term of ninety Olympiads, the right of celebrating the Olympic Games, and expended for them yearly a sum amounting to nearly £40,000; but these games were not regularly celebrated at Antioch until the reign of Commodus (Gibbon, chap. xxii.).

[3] Lamp., *Comm.*, 37. The oldest inscription mentioning the *classis nova Libyca* is of the time of Commodus. (*Recueil de la Soc. archéol.* of Constantine, 1873, p. 460. See Erm. Ferrero, *Inscr. d'Afrique relatives à la Flotte*, in *Bull. épigr. de la Gaule*, August, 1882.)

[4] Or.-Henzen, Nos. 5,272 and 5,487: . . . . *clandestinos latrunculorum transitus.*

would show us the same labours carried on everywhere. What Fénelon said of the monarchy of Louis XIV., that the old machine continued to move with the impulse originally given it, might long be said of the Roman Empire.

Disquieting symptoms, however, are seen to appear. Under the feeble and violent hand that holds the reins Roman discipline is relaxed through all the orders.[1] In the city riots break out; seditions announce the reign of the soldiery; disorders springing up around the temples,[2] a religious war; and the anarchy which will soon threaten the very existence of the Empire is manifested by the insolent success of a bandit pillaging with impunity many provinces. Lastly, the military spirit is growing feeble; senators desert those offices which involve actual service. One of them obtains from Commodus an exemption from military duty.[3]

On the frontier there is no important war during these twelve years. A Roman garrison permanently established on the Kour, in a fortress built in that remote region by Vespasian, kept the people of the Caucasus quiet and protected Armenia against them.[4] Niger and Albinus, who both were to taste imperial power,[5] and to die of it, seem to have had to defend Dacia against the Sarmatians and Gaul against the Frisii. In Britain, the Caledonians having broken through the line of Roman defences, Marcellus, a soldier of the old stamp, drove them back into their mountains; some similar outbreaks in Mauretania were repressed with equal promptness.

Commodus heard not even the echo of these remote sounds of war. To leave the care of public affairs to his prætorian prefect, and to send him his death order at the faintest suspicion; to keep the children of the governors as hostages, that he might have nothing to fear from the provinces; and to make himself secure in Rome by granting all possible licence to the prætorians—it was to this that he had reduced the science of government. In regard to the finances, he had resumed the system of raising money out of condemnations, a capital sentence bringing with it always, in accordance with the oldest Roman laws, the confiscation of the

[1] Spartian, *Pescenn., Nig.*, 10: *Commodi temporum dissolutio.*
[2] See p. 31, n. 3.
[3] Orelli, No. 5,003; L. Renier, *Mélanges d'épigraphie*, pp. 12 and 20.
[4] Inscription of 185. (*Journal asiatique*, 1869, p. 103.)
[5] Tac., *Ann.*, vi. 20: . . . . *degustabis imperium.*

property of the condemned person; or, as in the year 188, he announced that he was about to depart on a long journey, and with this pretext drew from the public treasury whatever money he desired. Having taken these precautions he abandoned himself quietly to his passion for chariot races, hunts, and the games of the amphitheatre.

Each of the tyrants of Rome had his favourite folly or dominant vice. Caligula thought himself divine; Nero, an incomparable singer; in this infamous band, Vitellius was the Silenus,

Commodus on Horseback striking a Tigress with his Javelin.[1]

and now Commodus is to be the gladiator. Seven hundred and thirty-five times he fought in the arena; and these combats were ruinous for the treasury, which paid 25,000 drachmæ for each of these royal performances;[2] they were also without peril, for every arrangement was made to secure that his imperial majesty should receive no harm at the hands of the victims, nor from teeth or claws of the wild beasts, who were often brought out in their cages. Always surrounded by Moorish or Parthian archers, Commodus excelled in throwing the spear or javelin; one day 100 bears fell by his hand. At each of these easy and disgraceful victories the senate applauded in chorus: "Thou art the

[1] Intaglio, 45 mill. by 55. (*Cabinet de France*, No. 2,096.)

[2] This was to be paid from the funds appropriated for games, but that sum being quickly exhausted, the expense fell upon the treasury. (Dion, lxxii. 19.)

master! Thou the first and most fortunate of men! Thou art conqueror and shalt ever be, Amazonius the victorious!" But we know to what a sad condition the descendants of the men who once ruled the world were now reduced—their continual terrors, their shameful sycophancy, in the presence of such rulers![1] One only, Pompeianus, the son-in-law and friend of Marcus Aurelius, dared to protest against this degradation, refusing to appear in the amphitheatre or even in the senate. Dion declares that he had never seen him there except in the time of Pertinax. This knight of Antioch was the Cato of his time. Old Rome still gave her stamp to some of her new children.

Commodus the Olympian. (Bronze Coin of Ephesus.)

But how easy for a young prince to become dizzy from this cloud of incense! The senate was not alone in exhausting all the vocabulary of servility; the people, the army all do the same; and Commodus could hear the acclamations of the provinces answering back those of Rome. The young men of Nepete subscribed to consecrate a monument to "Commodus the Victorious." A coin of Ephesus gives him, as formerly in the case of Hadrian, the surname of Olympios,[2] and an inscription calls him "most noble, most fortunate of princes." In another the offering is made to "the Roman Hercules." Accordingly "the god"[3] respects nothing upon earth; he deprives the months of their names to give them others of his own choosing; he even changes the names of Rome and Jerusalem and calls them Coloniæ Commodienses. His reign is the Golden Age; at least, so his imperial letters are dated, *ex sæculo aureo*, and his birthday is to be celebrated throughout the whole Empire. But the festival is only for himself, for "on that day," Dion tells us, "we senators, our wives and our children, must each of us

The Roman Hercules. (Reverse of a Bronze Medallion of Commodus.)

[1] See vol. v. p. 512, under what a reign of terror the senators lived.

[2] For Nepete, see Orelli, No. 879; for Ephesus, Eckhel, vii. p. 136.

[3] Ἐσπλάτο καὶ θεός (Zonaras, xii. 5). Renier, *Inscr. de l'Algérie*, No. 4,103. Orelli, No. 886.

give him two aurei, and the decurions of all the cities must send him five denarii apiece" (lxxii. 16).

His greatest ambition was to resemble the son of Alcmena, who, to his mind, was only the god of brute strength. There was carried before him in the streets the club and lion's skin of the conqueror of the hydra; in the amphitheatre they were laid on a gilded platform and sometimes he used them. Dion relates that having collected a great number of maimed and infirm persons taken at random in the streets of Rome, he had them costumed to represent fabulous monsters with long serpents' tails, and gave them sponges instead of stones to defend themselves with, when he attacked them with his club. He thus imagined himself repeating the exploits of Hercules, and a rumour was current that the spectators seemed to him very well adapted to fill the part of the birds of Stymphalus, and that he proposed to shoot his arrows into the crowd that filled the amphitheatre. To keep this threat ever before the minds of the senators, he caused to be placed in the curia a statue of himself as Hercules,[2] with bow strung in hand. "Never," says the historian, who was the witness of what he narrates, "did he appear in public without being stained with blood;" and Lampridius adds, "when he had mortally wounded a gladiator, he plunged his hand into the wound, then wiped the blood off on his hair." He was indeed a butcher.

Veiled Priest driving Two Oxen. (Reverse of a great Bronze of Commodus.)[1]

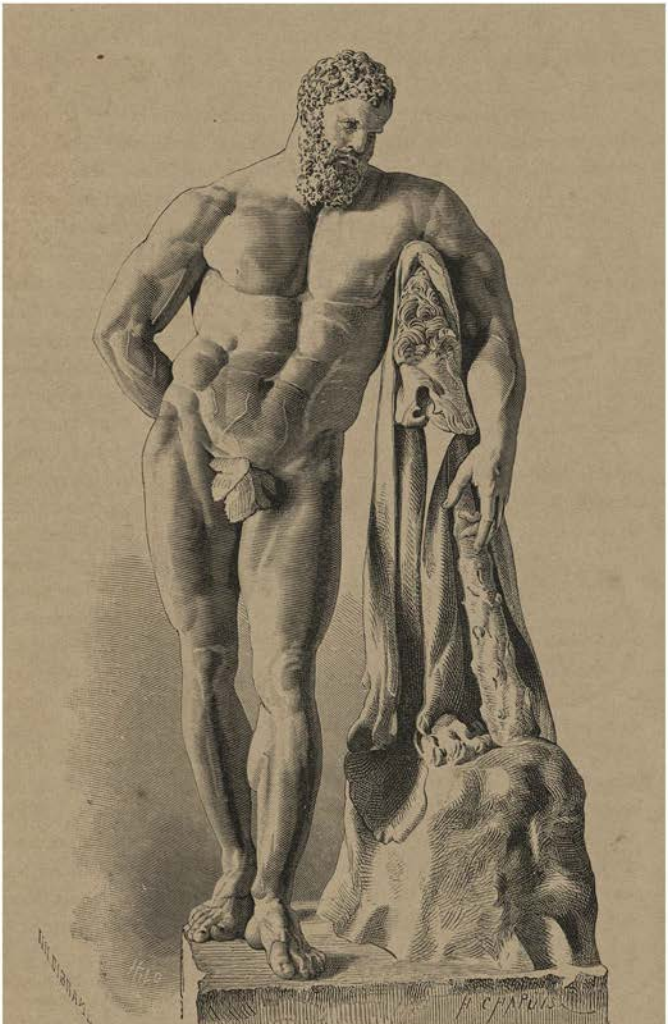
The Golden Age under Commodus.[3]

Again we have an insane emperor, in whom the intoxication of youth and power takes the form of blood-madness. Nero was not so bad as he, for in the case of that grotesque artist there was at least a spark of art, and his Babylonian entertainments, in

[1] COL(onia) L(ucia) AN(tonina) COM(modiana) P(ontifex) M(aximus) TR(ibunitia) P(otestas) XV., IMP(erator) VIII., COS(ul) VI. Reverse of a great bronze of Commodus. For Jerusalem, p. 53.

[2] The Vatican has a statue of Commodus as Hercules, of which there is in the Louvre a beautiful copy in bronze.

[3] ΚΟΜΟΔΟΥ ΒΑCΙΛΕΥΟΝΤΟC Ο ΚΟCΜΟC ΕΥΤΥΧΕΙ ΝΙΚΑΙΕΩΝ (*under the rule of Commodus all the world is happy*), legend surrounded by a wreath. Reverse of a bronze coin of Nicæa.



Hercules, known as the Farnese, found at Rome in the Baths of Caracalla.
(Museum of Naples.)

all their infamy, had a certain grandeur. The instincts of Commodus were always low, and his pleasures vulgar or hideous, and it is this which gave probability to the current story that his father was one of the heroes of the arena.

The populace is not over nice in the choice of its favourites; when it has the vote, violent declamations are its delight; when it has only the right to applaud, skill and physical force are what it loves. Accordingly these exploits of the highway on the part of its emperor enchanted the Roman crowd. They adored this man who lavished gold upon them and lived in the amphitheatre; who gave them another spectacle, the terror of the nobles, and from time to time as an interlude a dead body to drag through the streets. But the aristocracy were indignant at being made to tremble under a ruler who appeared to them singularly petty in comparison with the great emperors who had preceded him. In the senate there existed no longer, as there had been during the first century, either republican rancours or patrician desires for power. Now it was perfectly understood how necessary to the Empire was a true emperor; how much vigilance, skill, and firmness in the supreme rank was needed to maintain, with the greatness of the Empire, the security of the individual and the liberty of all. These sentiments showed themselves later when, to replace the last of the Antonines, all men in the curia agreed to place the imperial purple upon the shoulders of a freedwoman's son. From the third year of the reign of Commodus a conspiracy, of which Lucilla was the soul, began in the palace itself. The emperor doubtless kept at a distance this ambitious woman, who was jealous of the empress as her superior in rank. She thought that by putting her son-in-law, or Quadratus, a rich young senator who shared in her projects, in her brother's place, she should obtain a larger share of power. To be sure of success she intrusted her son-in-law, who was an intimate of the emperor, with the striking of the fatal blow. As Commodus passed through a dark passage-way which led to the amphitheatre, the murderer fell upon him with a poniard, crying, "This is what the senate sends thee!" But he was disarmed before striking the blow (183); and his imprudent words cost many senators their lives. From that day the old friends of Marcus Aurelius appeared to his son no longer silent

censors, but enemies whose blows he must prevent. The palmy days of the informers came again, and murders seemed to have no end. Lucilla, her son-in-law, the latter's father, Quadratus, and many others perished. One of the prætorian prefects, Tarrutenius Paternus, a learned lawyer who has the honour of being placed among the jurisconsults of the *Pandects*, could not be convicted of

Sextus Quintilius Maximus.[1]

having shared in the conspiracy. But Perennis, his colleague, wished to be sole chief of the guard. He caused Paternus to be appointed senator to remove him from the prefecture, then accused him of treason, and Paternus was condemned together with the grandson of Hadrian's great jurisconsult. The latter, Salvius Julianus, was, at the accession of Commodus, in command of a

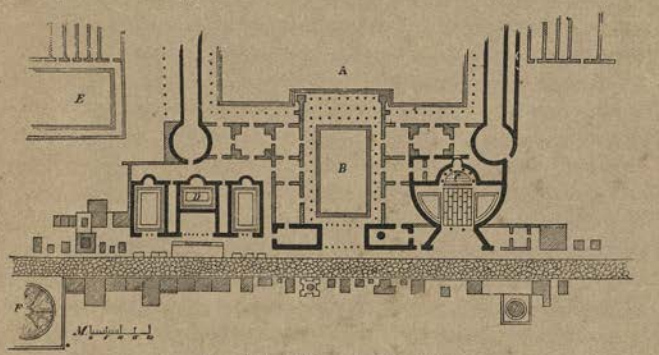
[1] The only bust known of any of the victims of Commodus. It was found in the ruins of the villa of the Quintilii, on the Appian Way. Cf. Henry d'Escamps, *Descript. des marbres du Musée Campana*, etc., No. 101. Paris, 1855.

Restoration of the Villa of the Quintilii, on the Appian Way, from Canina. (Cf. next page.)

large army, and much beloved by his troops; he had not desired

Ruins of the Villa of the Quintilii (*Roma Vecchia.*)[1]

to dispute the Empire with the son of Marcus Aurelius, but he



Plan of the Villa of the Quintilii.[2]

might have done it had he chosen; this was enough to render him guilty, since he was esteemed dangerous. The list of the tyrant's

[1] From Canina, *la Prima parte della via Appia*, pl. 33.

[2] A, peristyle; B, vestibule; C, nymphæum; D, temple of Hercules; E, hot baths; F, tomb on the Appian Way. (Canina, *op. cit.*, pl. 32.)

victims is long; Dion assures us that of all who had enjoyed distinction in the State during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, three only, under Commodus, escaped with their lives. Like Caligula, he often took a man's life only for the sake of taking his property and relieving his own financial embarrassments; many women perished on account of their wealth.

The fate of the Quintilii struck the imagination of contemporaries, habituated and hardened as they were to scenes of murder: they were two brothers of Trojan origin famous for their wealth, learning, and military talents, and they were inseparable. The emperors, taking pleasure in honouring this fraternal friendship, had caused them to pass through the career of public duties together: they had been consuls, heads of armies, and governors of Achaia, one serving as lieutenant to the other; they both signed the same despatches, and Marcus Aurelius sanctioned this affectionate illegality, addressing to the two a rescript which still exists in the *Digest*. Commodus also united them, but in death.[1] There is still to be seen on the Appian Way the great ruins of their palace, called in the Middle Ages *Roma Vecchia*. Dion relates that, in order to escape, the son of one of them, Condianus, had caused it to be reported that he was dead. Feigning to fall from his horse, he had himself brought home covered with blood, and while a ram was burned in his stead on the funeral pile, he concealed himself and made his escape. Many paid with their lives for their resemblance to the young Quintilius. After the death of Commodus a pretended Condianus claimed the rich inheritance. "The Claimant" was extremely well-informed in the history of the Quintilii and answered all questions pertinently. But Pertinax, an old professor of grammar, confused the claimant by addressing him in Greek; whereupon it was decided that a man who was ill-versed in the language of Homer could not be a Quintilius.

During the war in Britain Perennis had replaced by knights the senators in command of the legions in that country. The soldiers, it was said, were offended that the distinction of the military grades should be thus impaired. This solicitude in the camps of Britain for the honour of the Conscript Fathers may well

[1] *Digest*, xxxviii. 2, 16, § 4. *Domus Quintiliorum omnis extincta* (Lamp., *Comm.* 4). This writer gives a long list of the victims of Commodus.

be doubted. Probably there were other motives of discontent. There was vague report of a great sedition appeased[1] by Pertinax after his life had been imperilled by it; and of an emperor, Priscus, or Pertinax himself, whom the legions would have raised to power, but who refused the offer. Fifteen hundred soldiers were sent to bring the complaints of the army to the emperor; Commodus, anxious at the approach of deputies so numerous that they might seem to bring commands rather than requests, went out of the city to meet them. "What is it, comrades," he said, "and for what do you come?" They rejoined that they had come because Perennis was conspiring against him and had the design of making his son emperor. Without further information the base Commodus gave up his faithful general.[2] He was beaten with rods, then beheaded, and his wife and sister and his two sons were put to death (185). The soldiers had unmade a minister; ere long they were to make and unmake emperors.

It is not clear where we ought to place the singular history of Maternus;[3] Herodian relates it after the fall of Perennis. This soldier having deserted together with some bold comrades, scoured the country, pillaging the villages. His troop, with a regular military organization and swelled by the addition of bandits and convicts to whom he opened the prison doors, grew strong enough to attack cities, many of which they sacked and burned. Maternus thus ravaged through Spain and Gaul, pillaging and burning, and having nothing to fear from the municipal militia, which through long peace had fallen into inefficiency. The government was obliged to decide on sending regular troops against him. Maternus was no common bandit; he resolved to attempt a great achievement. Learning that preparations were on foot against him, he divided his band, gave his men orders to make their way into Italy by unfrequented routes, and directed them to meet him at Rome on the festival of the Mother of the Gods. Upon that day disguises

[1] Dion, lxxiii. 4, and Capit., *Pertinax*, 3.

[2] This is the testimony of Dion (lxxii. 12). Herodian (i. 24) relates the story differently. Instead of the soldiers from Britain they are legionaries of Illyria, and he says that a begging philosopher came in the midst of a *fête* to denounce the intrigues of the prefect, who caused him to be burned alive.

[3] Dion Cassius does not mention it, but Lampridius speaks of the *bellum desertorum* (*Comm.*, 16), and Spartian (*Nig.*, 3) says of Niger that he was sent *ad comprehendendos desertores qui innumeri Gallias tunc vexabant.*

of all kinds were authorized. Maternus proposed to assume, with some of his men, the dress of the prætorians, and thus approaching the emperor to slay him and take his place. Being denounced by a fellow-conspirator, he was put to death with all of his band who could be discovered.

Diana of the Vatican.
(Museo Chiaramonti, No. 122.)

Nothing authorizes us to say that this audacious enterprise could not have been successful. In a State where there is no strong and vital institution between ambitious men and the sovereign power to shelter the ruler from a surprise, the thrust of a dagger may suffice to change a dynasty. These catastrophes we have already seen, and many more are yet before us in the history of Rome. In this regard the imperial dignity had a certain analogy with the priesthood of the temple of the Arician Diana, whose high-priest was bound to slay his predecessor.

The freedman Cleander, a former porter who had become the chamberlain of Commodus, took the place of Perennis in the imperial favour. This man had retained all the vices of a slave, adding to them greed for gain. He sold offices, provinces, and judicial decisions; there were seen in one week several prefects of the guards, and as many as twenty-five consuls in one year.[1] With a part of this money he bought the emperor's mistresses, and even the emperor himself. The prætorians were soon to follow this example, but it was the supreme power itself which they offered for sale. Governments also reap that which they sow.

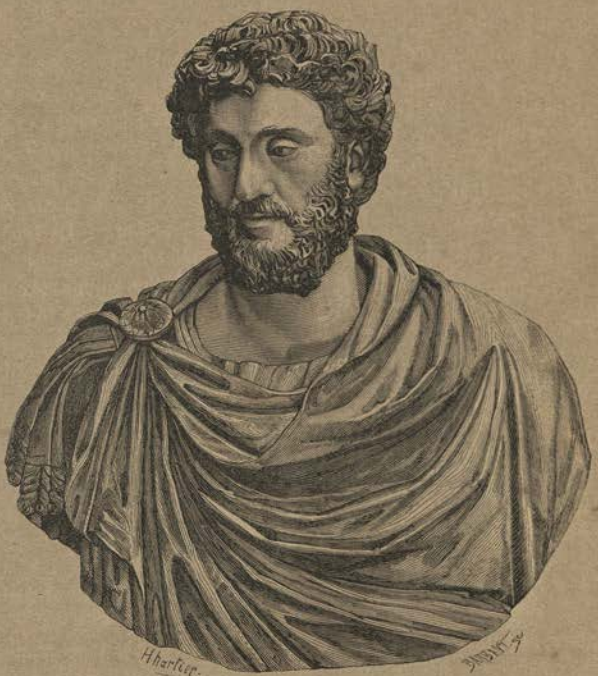
[1] According to Lampridius; but of this we have no other proof than his word, which is not sufficient.

Burrus, the brother-in-law of Commodus, wished to enlighten the emperor upon the unworthy conduct of his favourite. Cleander accused him of aspiring to the imperial dignity, and obtained against him an order of death, which was extended to many senators. He then took for himself the prefecture of police, consenting, however, to share it with two colleagues.

This freedman, who has been called the minister of the dagger, might have continued with impunity to decimate the nobles; but he allowed the populace to go hungry, and they were the cause of his downfall. For some years there had been a condition of want; the price of corn rose and distributions were suspended. Commodus wished to compel the traders to sell at a lower price; but provisions were concealed and the evil increased. An immense fire, like that in Nero's time, and an epidemic which in Rome alone carried off 2,000 persons daily,[1] raised the public exasperation to the highest pitch. These scourges did not appear the result of natural causes and the public clamoured for a victim. It was asserted that Cleander had hoarded wheat. We know the fate of those thus accused by the populace in times of scarcity. One day in the circus a band of boys rushed into the arena with loud outcries, headed by a virago of great stature and fierce aspect, who doubtless was got rid of in the tumult, which gave the foolish crowd and the enemies of Cleander the occasion to say that some goddess had been the leader. To the boys' clamour was joined that of the spectators; an excitement seized upon all; they abandoned the games and rushed out of the city to the Quintilian palace where the emperor then was. To stop this multitude Cleander caused them to be charged by the German or prætorian guard; many persons were killed, many others wounded, and the great rabble turned back into the city. To disperse them still more utterly the cavalry followed them into the streets. Assailed by a shower of stones and tiles from the house-tops, attacked by the soldiers of the urban cohorts who made common cause with the people, they fell back in disorder, upon which the crowd again turned in the direction of the palace. mingling cries of death to

[1] Another had occurred in 182. Cf. Or.-Henzen, No. 5,489. It would seem that the great plague which had ravaged Rome in the reign of Marcus Aurelius left behind it centres of contagion, whence it again appeared from time to time under Commodus.

Cleander with expressions of affection for the emperor. A concubine of Commodus made known to him the riot in the city, the danger that might threaten himself, and the means of avoiding it. Commodus caused his favourite to be slain and threw out the



Commodus.[1]

body to the populace. For many hours the crowd bore through the city on the point of a spear the head of the all-powerful minister, and dragged the headless corpse through the streets. His son, a little boy brought up at court, had his brains dashed out on the pavement; those who had shared the fortune of the favourite, shared now in the ignominy of his death, and, after

[1] Marble bust found at Ostia. (Vatican, *Braccio nuovo*, No. 121.)

being the sport of the rabble, were dragged to the Gemonian stairs (189).[1]

On the last day of the games Commodus, before descending into the arena, had given his club to Pertinax. Later, men remembered this, and saw in it a sign. The expiation was drawing near. The son of Marcus Aurelius, whom his biographer calls "more cruel than Domitian, more impure than Nero," was a wild beast who could not fail some day to be stricken down. Among the possessions of one of his victims Commodus had found a woman to whom he attached himself passionately, making her his concubine. This union, a sort of morganatic marriage recognized by the Roman world,[2] permitted Marcia to receive almost all the honours due to an empress.[3] This woman, who seems to have possessed liberality of mind and determination, had gained an immense ascendancy over the weak soul of the imbecile buffoon; her medals, which perhaps are portraits, reveal a strong character, and we have seen with what energy she acted in the affair of Cleander. She was a Christian,[4] in so far as this was possible for the mistress of Commodus; at least, she favoured the Christians, who owed to her

Commodus and Marcia.
(Bronze Medallion in the *Cabinet de France*.)

[1] Alarmed by this riot, Commodus gave some care to the provisioning of Rome, as is proved by many medals representing him as Hercules, his right foot on the prow of a vessel and extending his hand to Africa, who is holding out ears of corn, with this legend: *Providentiæ Augustæ*. Cf. Cohen, *Comm.*, at the Nos. 212, 213, 719, etc. We shall see that Septimius Severus kept very close watch over this supply.

[2] The condition of concubine had not all the civil effects of *justæ nuptiæ*, but it did not incur the disgrace attached to illegitimate connections . . . . *nec adulterium per concubinatum . . . . committitur, nam, quia concubinatus per leges nomen assumpsit, extra legis pœnam est* (*Digest*, xxv. 7, 3, § 1). It was really a kind of marriage, not suppressed until the time of Leo VI., the Philosopher. (Cf. Accarias, *Précis de droit romain*, vol. i. pp. 193–5.) It is possible the children followed, as in the morganatic marriages of our time, the condition of the mother, and were not subject to the father, *patria potestas*. The name of concubine had no disgrace attached to it. A widow inscribed on her husband's tomb, *concubina et hæres*. (Fabretti, *Inscr.*, p. 337.) Jumentarius furnishes a burying-place for his brethren, their children *et uxoribus concubinisque*. (Wilmanns, 330.) Vespasian, Antoninus, and Marcus Aurelius had had concubines before this time, and Constantius Chlorus and Constantine kept up the custom.

[3] All, Herodian says, excepting that the sacred fire was not carried before her. Capitolinus (*Max. jun.*, 1) gives the detail of the costume of a Roman empress.

[4] . . . . πολλά τε ὑπὲρ Χριστιανῶν σπουδάσαι. This testimony of Dion is confirmed by the

the tranquillity which they enjoyed during this reign. But, to keep the space around the throne vacant, these frenzied tyrants end by turning against themselves the instruments of their tyranny and of their pleasures. Marcia, Eclectus the chamberlain, Lætus the prefect of the guards, all felt themselves in danger. Is it probable that Commodus overheard some imprudent words? This is not known, but it is certain that he believed in the existence of a plot, which he called forth, if it did not already exist. Herodian relates in perhaps too dramatic a manner the last incident, which, without doubt, did but decide the day of execution.

Marcia.[1]

On the eve of the Saturnalia Commodus formed the plan of going to pass the night in a school of gladiators, whence he would go forth in the morning for the day's *fête*, armed from head to foot, and preceded by all his comrades of the arena. Vainly did Marcia and those about him urge him most strenuously to abandon the unworthy design; he dismissed them angrily, and to put an end to this opposition to his will he wrote upon tablets the names of the new victims who were to perish on the following night, placing at their head Marcia, Lætus, and Eclectus. When he left his bed-room to go to the bath he placed these tablets under his pillow. A child, whose sportive ways had amused the emperor, and who had the range of the palace, entered this room, discovered the tablets, and took them away for a plaything. Marcia met him and read the fatal list; in all haste she warned those whom Commodus had thus assigned to her as accomplices. They determined that, after the bath, she should present to the emperor a poisoned draught; the effect was merely to produce vomiting;

Philosophumena (ix. 12), who call her φιλόθεος, and relate that she sent a priest, the eunuch Hyacinthus, who brought her up, to deliver the Christian exiles of Sardinia. The measure seems to have been a general one. "Under Commodus," says Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.*, v. 21), "we enjoyed a profound tranquillity." (See chap. xc. *ad fin.*)

[1] From an engraved stone (amethyst, 18 mill. by 14) in the *Cabinet de France*. M. Charles Lenormant recognized Marcia in this intaglio, which was published by Mariette under the name of Sappho.

upon this they caused him to be strangled by a young and vigorous athlete (31st December, 192). His body, secretly removed from the palace, was hastily interred, and news was spread that Commodus had died of apoplexy. The senate, who yesterday offered incense to him, now pursued his memory with all maledictions;[1] they proposed to declare him a public enemy and cast his body into the Tiber. To this Pertinax objected, but his statues were thrown down and in every direction were dragged through the streets those figures representing him which by and by were again restored, especially in Africa, after Severus had made him a god. He was thirty-one years of age, the same age as Nero; Caracalla was killed at twenty-nine; Caligula at twenty-eight; Heliogabalus still younger, at twenty-one. Real tyrants seldom grow old.

Young Athlete. (Statue in the Museum of Naples.)

Commodus has against him too many detestable things for us to omit the one good thing that can be said of him: he gave peace to the Christians and released those from prison whom his father had incarcerated.[2]

[1] The long enumeration may be read in Lampridius (18).

[2] See chap. xci. § 1. We read in Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.*, v. 21): "Apollonius was accused by a minister of the devil in a time when this was not permitted. Perennis sent the informer to execution; but he also referred Apollonius to the senate, to make answer on the subject of his faith, and the latter, refusing to abjure, had his head cut off, because it was forbidden by law to release Christians who had been accused, unless they should recant." The prætorian prefect punishes with death an accuser of the Christians, which must have intimidated those who might have felt inclined to follow his example. But Apollonius having publicly avowed his faith, he applies in the case the rescript of Trajan. This is certainly very precise jurisprudence.

From a more general point of view, his reign commences a new period in the history of the Empire. It is the end of the good days and the beginning of the days of misfortune. One single reign had sufficed to develop the fatal germ existing within the imperial monarchy, namely, the preponderating power of the army. This evil had appeared for the first time on the death of Nero, and had very nearly rent the Empire in pieces; the firm hand of Vespasian, Trajan, and Hadrian had for once suppressed it. It broke forth anew when an accident of birth or of public tumult brought to the head of the legions, instead of renowned and honoured emperors, a gladiator, such as Commodus, or a feeble and licentious Syrian like Heliogabalus. From the day when the soldier saw at close quarters the disgrace of his rulers and the base adulation of the senate, the power of the government and of the civil law gave way.

In the camps, the near presence of the enemy kept up somewhat of the early discipline; but in Rome, amidst the seductions of the great city, the prætorians had formed many habits which implied a great deal of licence. Pertinax alienated them when he forbade them to treat the citizens insolently. Commodus, on the other hand, whose sole defence they were against the nobles whom he was decimating, gave them fatal indulgence, and his distrust of the aristocracy obliged him to give the prætorian command to *parvenus*, and even to a freedman. These generals of fortune, in their turn, took their precautions against the emperor. They sought to make sure of their cohorts, and for this purpose, made them up of men from whom they could ask anything, for the reason that they themselves refused them nothing. They called into the ranks, once open only to Italians, then to the bravest provincials, the very barbarians: the chief of the band who rushed into the palace of Pertinax a few years later was a Tongrian. Soldiers like these must have cared far less for the honour of the Roman name than for the fear they might be able to inspire. Accordingly, the Empire still stands firm; but, in the presence of a senate whom the ruler degrades and of magistrates who have become powerless, a turbulent and rapacious soldiery will make, for the sake of gratifying their cupidity, revolutions which will ruin the provinces and lay open the frontiers to the barbarians. Military

order will soon supersede civil order. The Antonines had depended upon the senate, their successors relied upon the legions, and for a century all, with the exception of three only, will be the servants of the soldiers rather than their masters. The officers in their turn will bow before the men who make emperors; and so it will come about that from the political power of the armies will follow the ruin of discipline, and hence the ruin of the great military institution of Augustus and of Hadrian.[1]

II.—Pertinax and Didius Julianus (193).

The murderers of Commodus made haste to choose an emperor, Publius Helvius Pertinax, an old general, who appeared to have preserved to advanced life[2] vigour enough to make men feel secure that, after the excesses of youth, the Empire would not now suffer from any senile feebleness. Lætus led him to the prætorian camp.

Famous for his severity, Pertinax could not please the soldiery who regretted Commodus, but they had no candidate at hand for the imperial dignity, so that between the ruler who could no longer do anything for them and the one who promised them a *donativum*, they resigned themselves to the change that had taken place. As for the populace, they had applauded Commodus and they now hailed Pertinax: it was one show and one largess more.

In the case of Commodus we had an emperor's son; in the case of Pertinax we see the rise of a man of the lower ranks. The son of a freedman, a charcoal dealer at Alba Pompeia in Liguria, Pertinax began to gain a livelihood as a teacher of grammar; not succeeding very well at this, he asked and obtained the rank of centurion through the favour of a patron. His merit raised him rapidly to the first rank in the army, and so to the highest in the State. He became prefect of a cohort in Syria, commander of a squadron in Britain, and in Mœsia, commissioner in charge of the Æmilian road to superintend the distribution of alimentary pensions;[3] later, he was chief of the flotilla of the Rhine, collector of

[1] "At this epoch," says Herodian (ii. 24), "began the corruption of the soldiers. From this time they showed an insatiable and shameful cupidity, and the greatest contempt for the emperor."

[2] He was sixty-six years of age. (Zonaras, xii. 7.)

[3] This office of *proc. ad alim.* filled by Pertinax, which we find indicated in many inscrip-

tribute in Dacia with a salary of 200,000 sesterces, legionary tribune, senator, prætor, legate of a legion which distinguished itself under his authority in Rhætia and Noricum, and, lastly, consul. His services at the time of the rebellion of Cassius against

The Emperor Pertinax.[1]

Marcus Aurelius had given him the command of the army of the Danube, and then the government of the two Mœsias, of Dacia, and of Syria. Thus, at the age of fifty-four, he had filled a variety of public offices and had administered four consular provinces. His

tions (*e.g.*, Or.-Henzen, Nos. 3,190, 3,814, 6,524, and No. 1,456 of the *C. I. L.*, vol. iii. p. 235, *proc. ad alim. per Apul. Calabr., Luc. et Bruttios*, for a contemporary of Alexander Severus and Gordian III.), proves that the alimentary institution of Trajan was still in full vigour as late as the middle of the third century; but it was interrupted under Commodus (Lamp., *Comm.*, 16), and Pertinax found arrears of nine years which he could not pay (Capit., *Pert.*, 9).

[1] Colossal marble bust, found at Pozzuoli. (Museo Campana. H. d'Escamps, *op. cit.*, No. 102.)

talents do not, however, appear to have been remarkable, and this rapid advancement proves only that the road to honour was open to all who knew how to pursue it.

He had not seen Rome since his appointment to the senate. When he returned thither he was reproached with having gained great wealth in his various employs. He had not conceived it his duty to ruin himself in the public service, and a strict economy had doubtless sufficed to bring him to fortune.[2] We may mention two facts to his honour: he kept his mother with him in his various promotions, and on erecting some fine buildings in his native city, he had the shop of his father, the charcoal dealer, inclosed within one of them.

Coin of Pertinax.[1]

Perennis caused him to be sent into exile; but Commodus on that prefect's death recalled Pertinax and put him at the head of the turbulent legions of Britain. Later the emperor appointed him to watch over the provisioning of the city, *præfectus frumenti dandi*, gave him the proconsulship of Africa,[3] and, as the highest honour, the prefecture of the city. By nature he was honest, destitute of ambitions, and somewhat penurious, as is the case with those who have made their fortunes slowly; but he was devoted to the public welfare, and would have been one of the best of rulers if he had been allowed to live, or if he had known how to defend himself.

Pertinax laureled-crowned. (Great Bronze.)

The imperial power alarmed him, he had no relish for it.[4] In the senate he offered the Empire to Pompeianus, who had been the patron of his early years;[5] and to Glabrio, who was reputed

[1] IMP. CÆS. P. HELV. PERTIN. AVG. Laureled head. On the reverse: AEQVIT. AVG. TR. P. COS. II. Equity standing, holding a balance and a cornucopia. Gold coin.

[2] Herodian (ii. 3) says that he was poor. His mother died while with him in Lower Germany, where her tomb was long to be seen. (Léon Renier, *Mél. d'épigr.*, p. 272.)

[3] In this province he had, according to Capitolinus (4), to repress many seditions caused *vaticinationibus earum quæ de templo Cœlestis emergunt*.

[4] *Horruisse illum imperium epistola docet*. Capitolinus, who speaks of this letter, unfortunately does not give it to us, the more so, because Julian in *The Cæsars* accuses Pertinax of having been "the accomplice, at least in thought, in the conspiracy whereby the son of Marcus perished."

[5] In respect to Pompeianus, cf. L. Renier, *Inscr. de Troesmis*, p. 5.

to be the descendant of Æneas; but these men were wise enough to decline the burdens and the perils. A few days later another senator venturing into the midst of the prætorians, the soldiers wished to make him emperor. Scarcely escaping from their hands, his toga torn to rags, he sheltered himself in the palace of Pertinax, and more surely to escape the imperial power fled from the city. Disinterestedness like this reveals a situation full of anxiety.

Pertinax refused for his wife the title of Augusta and that of Cæsar for his son. "When he has deserved it," the father said, "it will be time enough to give it to him."[1] All his own relations and servants remained in their humble condition; he gave up his own property to them, and remained simple in his habits of life. At news of his accession his compatriots from the Ligurian mountains, a rapacious race, hastened to Rome in crowds to draw profit from this fortune; but Pertinax sent them away as they came. He had the same duty to fulfil that had devolved upon Vespasian, namely, to restore order in the State, in the magistracies which had suffered from so many arbitrary appointments,[2] in the finances ruined by mad prodigality—in the treasury he had found only 1,000,000 sesterces. To procure the money which the soldiers and the people needed he sold his predecessor's favourites at auction, the accomplices or the victims of his debauchery, quite a harem; also the weapons of Commodus, his garments of silk and gold, his valuable furniture, and a thousand curiosities, among which we note carriages with a movable seat which turned easily in all directions, and also marked the hour and the distance passed over. Pertinax confiscated the property of the buffoons, made the freedmen disgorge their ill-gotten gains, and drove out of the palace all useless persons. The parasites who, under Commodus, lived at the emperor's table were bitterly exasperated at what they called the

[1] At Metz an inscription has been found giving the title of Augusta to the emperor's mother and that of Cæsar to his son. (Renier, *Mél. d'épigr.*) These provincials believed that things had gone on as usual at Rome, and allowed themselves a flattery which they were sure would not be displeasing. Inscriptions bearing the name even of Pertinax are rare. One has lately been discovered in Africa: *Divo Helvio Pertinaci*; it belongs to the time when Severus called his father: *Divo Pertinaci Augusti patri.*

[2] Under Commodus many had been *adlecti inter prætorios.* He obliged them to take rank after those who had really acted as prætors. (Capit., *Pert.*, 6.) He doubtless made the same regulation in respect to the other magistracies, thus restoring order in the senate.

meanness of the new emperor, and slandered him incessantly. So immense were the resources of the Empire at this time, that less than three months of strict and economical administration enabled Pertinax to fulfil half of his promises to the prætorians,[1] to pay many public debts, and resume the works of public utility which had been suspended under Commodus. He suppressed many of the hindrances to commerce; he exempted from taxes for ten years those who should cultivate the deserted lands of Italy, and restored security by the rehabilitation of the victims of Commodus, the recall of exiles, the condemnation of informers, and the protection accorded to citizens against the insolence of the soldiery.

But this order, this economy, suited neither the prætorians nor the populace. Pertinax had ventured to forbid the former to carry weapons in the streets,[2] or to be insolent towards passers-by, and had said to them: "Many disorders have appeared in our age, with your aid I propose to correct them;" and his first pass-word had been: *militemus*, "let us be soldiers." In these words the soldiery had discerned an intention to bring them back to the early discipline and to warlike duties. In the case of the populace, Pertinax had suppressed the distribution of corn to children from nine years old, a measure introduced by Trajan. Lastly, he showed himself disinclined to be guided by Lætus, who regarded this distrust as a presage of disgrace, and from that time began intrigues among the prætorian cohorts. A conspiracy was originated, or at least, Falco, an ex-consul, was accused of aspiring to the Empire; the senate was about to condemn him when Pertinax interposed and swore that no senator should be put to death during his reign. A slave having accused many prætorians of complicity in the designs of Falco, Lætus caused them to be put to death, throwing upon the prince the odium of the execution. Being ill-paid and feeling themselves objects of suspicion, they resolved to rid themselves of a parsimonious emperor and of all anxiety for their own lives. Three hundred repaired in arms to the palace; there were guards enough there to drive back this handful of insurgents; but all the servants of the palace, whom Dion calls the Cæsarians, ruined by the economy of their master, opened the gates to the assassins. Pertinax

[1] *Promisit duodena millia nummum, sed dedit sena* (Capit., *Pert.*, 15).

[2] . . . . μήτε πελίκεις φέρειν μετὰ χείρας (Herod., ii. 4).

believed that he could stop them by going out to meet them unarmed. The sight of the emperor did indeed produce an effect upon them. Many of them had already sheathed their swords, when a Tongrian soldier rushed upon the emperor and wounded him. Immediately all hesitation was at an end; all struck at him, and his head, borne on a spear, was carried out to the prætorian camp. He had reigned eighty-seven days (28th of March, 193).

There was in Rome at this time a senator by name Julianus,[1] of great wealth and noble lineage, for he was descended from Hadrian's great jurisconsult, and had been brought up in the household of Domitia Lucilla, the mother of Marcus Aurelius. He was a man of small mind and puerile vanity, to whom life had taught nothing. He filled however not discreditably the highest offices in the State, governed many provinces, defeated some German tribes, and at a time of life which should have been for him the age of wisdom, sixty years, suffered himself to be dragged to the abyss by the ambition of his wife, the haughty Manlia Scantilla, who was eager to change her husband's laticlave for the imperial purple.

Manlia Scantilla,
Wife of Didius Julianus.[2]

Although the Empire had been often bought, it had not as yet been publicly put up at auction: Rome was now about to witness this disgrace. To tranquillize the prætorians, Pertinax had sent out to their camp his father-in-law Sulpicianus, who was the prefect of Rome. This senator again was one of those commonplace persons who, ignoring the obligations of power, see only its glitter. When the head of Pertinax was shown to him, he proposed instantly to buy of the murderers the imperial purple which had just been dipped in the blood of his son-in-law. The rumour of this spread quickly, and Julianus hastened to enter the lists as his rival. Then began a scene without name, and fortunately

[1] Marcus Didius Severus Julianus. (*C. I. L.*, vol. vi. No. 1,401.)
[2] Bust in the Capitol, Hall of the Emperors, No. 47.

without parallel. Julianus was on the top of the wall and Sulpicianus was in the camp; and the two bid against each other. Messengers passed between the two, saying: "He offers so much; what will you give?" And, "The other goes higher; will you go higher still?" They went as far as 5,000 drachmæ, or 20,000 sesterces, and the offers being equal, the soldier hesitated, sure to get more in the end for his commodity; finally, Julianus routed his adversary by a bold advance of 1,250 drachmæ. He cried the sum from the top of the wall; he counted it on his fingers, that those who could not hear might see, and he threw down to them his tablets on which he had written that he would rehabilitate the memory of Commodus, while Pertinax would unquestionably be avenged by Sulpicianus. The latter dared not go further. Each prætorian was therefore to receive by this bargain about £250. "There had been a time when the senate had proclaimed the sale of a piece of ground which was part of the territory of the State: it was the field whereon Hannibal was encamped."[1] We may well find this scene disgraceful; but we must admit that the *donativum*, whose origin we have seen, was a practice from which no emperor could escape. The odious feature is not the sum, but the auction. Marcus Aurelius gave almost as much,[2] and among nations who are very free, who are even very proud, men buy a portion of power, if not from the prætorians—who, happily, no longer exist—at least from the electors.

The decision being made, the soldiers brought a ladder so that the purchaser might come down inside the camp and receive the oaths of his new guards and also the imperial insignia. They caused him to appoint two prætorian prefects chosen by themselves, after which they opened the gates, and with standards displayed and in order of battle conducted their new leader to the senate, whom they presented under the name of evil omen, Commodus. They took the precaution, however, to make him swear that he would bear no ill-will towards his competitor.[2] It was wise not to discourage those who might be tempted to renew this shameful traffic.

[1] Chateaubriand, *Études historiques*.

[2] Twenty thousand sesterces. See vol. v. p. 169, and for the value of the sesterce, vol. iv. p. 790, n. 4. Now the 1,250 drachmæ of Julianus are only 5,000 sesterces more.

Many senators trembled, among others our historian Dion, who had often had occasion to sue Julianus in court. They loved Pertinax and considered his successor ridiculous. They were also shocked at the bargain which had just been concluded. But all the approaches to the curia, and even the senate-house itself, were filled with soldiers. The senators hastened to welcome the new emperor, to admire his foolish speeches, and to lavish upon him the wonted acclamations. Julianus finally went up to the palace; there finding the supper which had been made ready for Pertinax, he ridiculed the simplicity of the repast, ordered another to be prepared, and played with dice within a few steps of the spot where lay the dead body of his predecessor;[1] but, from the morrow on, came to him the terrible cares of a disputed authority, and but a few days later the anguish of a near and inevitable death.

Reverse of a Coin of Julianus bearing the Legend: *Rector orbis.* (Large Bronze.)

He had made no promises to the people, who were wounded in their dignity by this offensive neglect. When he presented himself on the following day in the curia, the crowd received him with loud outcries, calling him usurper and parricide. He took matters easily at first, and assured them that he would give them money. "We will have none," they cried, filled with unwonted disinterestedness, "we will not accept it." Upon this he ordered the troops to disperse them, and many were wounded; the others fled and took refuge in the circus. Dion asserts that they remained there all night and through the following day, invoking the gods, and—which would have been more useful—the military leaders, especially Pescennius Niger, or the Black, who was at this time far away in Syria. They were let alone, and the feeble riot subsided.

Meanwhile the imperial mint coined money representing the new ruler with a laurel wreath and the lying inscription: *Rector orbis*, while others had the legend: *Concordia militaris;* but, of the world, all that Julianus possessed was merely the space on which stood the palace in which he had just taken up his residence,

[1] Spartian represents him as frugal and thoughtful, but at the end of his account speaks otherwise. Herodian confirms Dion, whom he often copies.

and the military concord existed only against him. The legions of the frontiers had just obtained the idea of what was meant by the election of an emperor, and they did not propose to leave to the prætorians all the advantages of this profitable traffic. Very strong armies, each consisting of three legions, occupied Britain, Upper Pannonia,[1] and Syria, under the famous generals Albinus, Severus, and Pescennius Niger. When news came that within three months two emperors had been assassinated and that a third had bought the Empire, there was a general movement of disgust towards the senate who had accepted all this. This feeling showed itself especially in the camps of the Danube, where Pertinax had commanded and had left an honourable memory.

Concordia militaris.[2]

Concordia militaris. (Reverse of a Large Bronze of Didius Julianus.)

Then recurred the scenes that had taken place on the death of Nero. Two of the armies, those of Pannonia and Syria, proclaimed their generals (April, 193), and the third would have done the same had not Severus skilfully negotiated with Albinus. At the same time that Severus made sure of the neutrality of the army in Britain he gained the assistance of the legions adjacent to his command, so that in a few days he found himself possessor of nearly half the military strength of the Empire.[3] His cause, therefore, was already gained when he set out for Rome, preceded by the declaration that he was coming to avenge Pertinax.[4] Secret emissaries had withdrawn his children from the

Didius Julianus, laureled-crowned. (Bronze.)

[1] Spartian (*Sev.*, 4), Herodian (ii. 33), and Borghesi (*Œuvres compl.*, v. p. 368), represent Severus as governor of both Pannonias; but Dion, who commanded in Upper Pannonia, gives him only this province and speaks of but three legions as under his orders. If he had had the two Pannonias he would have had four legions.

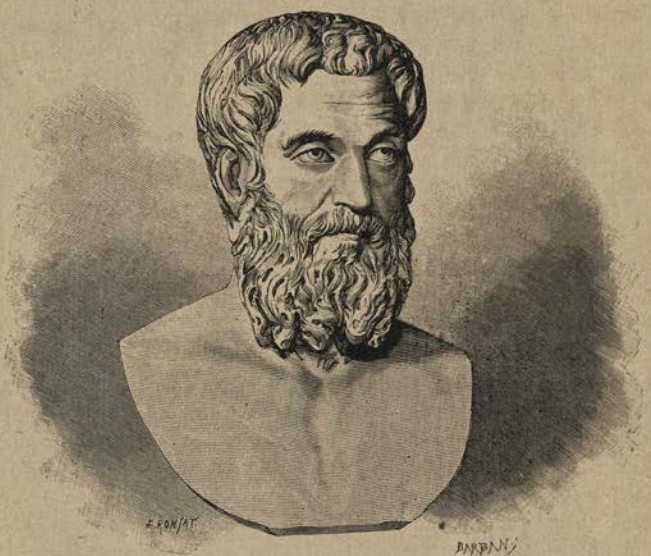
[2] CONCORD. MILIT. Concord standing between two standards. Reverse of a gold coin of Didius Julianus.

[3] "The fourteen legions who proclaimed Septimius Severus, and to whom the new Augustus gave the *donativum*, were the ten legions guarding the Danube and the four legions on the Rhine." (Robert, *les Legions du Rhin*, p. 46.) M. de Celeuneer, *Essai sur la vie de Sévère*, counts sixteen legions. Spartian says (*Sev.*, 5) that it was necessary to urge Severus, *repugnans*. He doubtless borrowed this word from the emperor's autobiography.

[4] . . . . *excipiebatur ab omnibus quasi ultor Pertinacis* (Spart., *ibid.*, 5; cf. Herod., ii.

city before the news of his elevation to the imperial power could reach there.

Julianus caused him to be declared a public enemy by the senate, and at once began his preparations; labourers were set at work digging a moat around the city; the gladiators from Capua were called in, mere bandits on whom no reliance could be placed;



Pescennius Niger. (Bust of the Vatican, Hall of Busts, No. 292.)

the soldiers from the fleet at Misenum were sent for, who made themselves ridiculous by their awkwardness in handling the javelin; and the elephants of the circus were armed for war, but very unsuccessfully, as they threw off the towers which were placed on their backs. Julianus even caused the palace to be barricaded, in sign of the desperate resistance he would make to the enemy even after an entrance had been effected into the city. The prætorians ought to have set him the example, but they were rich, habituated

9, 10). He even assumed the name of Pertinax, which we find on many of his inscriptions. Cf. L. Renier, *Mélanges d'épigr.*, pp. 180 *et seq.*

to an indolent life, and to pay for having their tasks done for them, while they insulted the people, whose terror they were.[1] As a pledge of the maintenance of his alliance with them, Julianus put to death Lætus and Marcia, the murderers of Commodus. At the same time he consulted the magicians, sacrificed children as victims, and despatched assassins to Severus[2] and senators to entice away his troops, and the prætorian prefect to defend Ravenna, the outpost where the fleet of the Adriatic was stationed. But Severus was on his guard, and advanced rapidly. Proclaimed at Carnuntum (near Vienna) on the 13th of April, he was obliged to employ ten or twelve days in negotiating with the legions of Upper Germany and in putting his army in motion. However, he arrived in the neighbourhood of the capital before the 1st of June, so that his troops must have made from Vienna to Rome in less than seven weeks, a distance of 266 leagues, or six leagues and a half on each day's march without intermission. This rapid march of a numerous army unexpectedly advancing through a country proves the abundance of provisions that agriculture and commerce could bring together at a moment's notice; it proves also the good condition of the roads and the subjection of the provinces, that is to say, the prosperity and calm of the Empire during the storms of Rome. Still further, it shows the admirable discipline in which Severus held his legions, that he could lay upon them such fatigues without exciting a murmur of discontent.

Coin of Didius Julianus.[3]

This rapidity check-mated all resistance. Severus crossed the Alps, the Adige, and the Po, without meeting any opposition, and entered Ravenna before the arrival in that city of the prefect who had been sent from Rome. Thus Julianus saw the narrow limits growing even narrower in which it was permitted to him to live and reign.

The last news overwhelmed him. Anxious, irresolute, he sought

[1] Dion, lxxiii. 16; Spart., *Did. Jul.*, 5.

[2] . . . . *Aquilium centurionem notum cædibus ducum miserat* (Spart., *Pescenn. Nig.*, 2).

[3] IMP. CÆS. M. DID. IVLIAN. AVG. Laurelled head. On the reverse: RECTOR ORBIS. Julianus standing, holding a globe. Gold coin.

advice, but the senate would give none; he offered the Empire to Pompeianus, who replied: "I am too old, and my sight is too weak." Reduced to the miserable hope of conciliating his formid-

Septimius Severus.[1]

able adversary by begging for his life and a share of the power, he formed the idea, like Vitellius, of sending the Vestals to meet Severus and naming him at once his colleague.[2]

The Conscript Fathers hastened this time to defer to his wish,

[1] Bust of marble with alabaster chlamys found at Rome under the church of S. Francis of Assisi. (Capitol, Hall of the Emperors, No. 50.)

[2] He also bestowed all honours upon the maternal grandfather of Severus. (Dion, lxxiii. 17.)

MAP
of
THE ROMAN EMPIRE
for the Reigns of Septimius Severus,
Caracalla and Gordian III.
Scale
Kilometers
OCEANUS ATLANTICUS
GERMANIA
SARMATIA
Pontus Euxinus
(Black Sea)
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
ARABIA FELIX

and he sent to the new Augustus the senate's decree by the hand of one of the prætorian prefects, who was suspected of meditating assassination under a show of friendliness. But the decree was scornfully rejected and the bearer of it put to death.

Meanwhile, to avoid making Rome the scene of a sanguinary conflict, as in the time of Vespasian, Severus prepared a movement there in his favour. He wrote to the magistrates; he sent edicts which were publicly posted; he named a prefect of the prætorian guard whom the trembling Julianus acknowledged; and he made known to the prætorians that he would pardon them if they would surrender the murderers of Pertinax. As base as their emperor, the guards at once seized the 300 and came to tell the consul Messala that their comrades were in chains. This was the end. "Immediately," says Dion Cassius, "Messala called us together and made known to us what the soldiers had done; upon which we decreed the death of Julianus and gave the imperial power to Severus and divine honour to Pertinax." Julianus was killed in his bed, saying only: "What wrong have I committed?" (2nd June, 193). He had held the Empire sixty-six days,[1] and did not deserve to retain it longer. It was already too much that he should have had the right to inscribe his name on the list of emperors. History must in its turn execute justice upon these adventurers who wish for power only that they may enjoy it; ambition without talents is a crime.

III.—Severus; Wars against Albinus, Niger, and the Parthians.

Once more we have a real man upon the imperial throne; but, harsh to others and to himself, he will make good his name by his inexorable sternness, an administrator of justice after the fashion of Tiberius and Louis XI.

Since the extinction of the family of the Cæsars we have seen upon the throne Italian, Spanish, and Gallic emperors; at last comes the turn of the African. Lucius Septimius Severus was born at

[1] Dion, lxxii. 17. Zonaras (xii. 7) says sixty. Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, and the *Chronicle* of Eusebius, represent him as killed in battle at the Milvian bridge, which proves great lack of the critical faculty on the part of these historians.

Leptis, April 11th, 146, in a family which had long been decorated with the laticlave, though without abandoning the province where lay their property and their influence and where their renown had begun. One of its members, however, had acquired notoriety enough at Rome in the time of Domitian to be celebrated by Statius in his verses.[1] But this Severus, quite another man from ours, is called by the poet "the gentle Septimius." Until his fourteenth year the future emperor remained in Africa, studying Greek and Latin literature without forgetting his native speech, whose accent he retained through life, so that Rome was about to have an emperor speaking the language of Hannibal.[2] Of this he was not at all ashamed; the great Carthaginian was his hero, and he erected a marble statue in honour of him. Very credulous, like all his contemporaries, in the matter of presages, he was also very resolute to put himself in a condition to respond to the advances of fortune,[3] which is the best way of making dreams come true.

Septimius Severus in Cuirass. (Statue in the Museum of Munich.)

[1] *Silv.*, iv. 5.

[2] Tzetzes, *Chil.*, i. 27. The emperor's sister could with difficulty speak the Latin language, *vix latine loquens* (Spart., *Sev.*, 15), and his son Caracalla caused many pictures of Hannibal to be made. (Herod., iv. 8.)

[3] *Omnibus sortibus nactus* (Spart., *Sev.*, 2), he was accused during the reign of Commodus of having consulted the Chaldæans to know whether he should succeed to the Empire. (*Ibid.*, 4.)

At Rome he studied law under an eminent jurisconsult, Q. Scævola. The gravity of his character appeared in the affection he conceived while attending this famous school for a fellow-student, who was destined later to eclipse the master. The tie of friendship was lifelong, and Papinian's friendship protects, in our minds, the memory of Severus. Three of his uncles had been consuls, and one of them obtained for the young man the office of quæstor and so an entrance into the senate (172). The career of public honours was thus opened to him at the age of twenty-seven; but we shall not follow him in it; this *cursus honorum* is already familiar to us, and we are interested only in the ruler. We need only notice that in 189 he was *consul suffectus* under Commodus.

While Julianus was dying in Rome Severus was approaching the city. The senate sent out a hundred of its members to meet him at Interamna, twenty leagues from Rome, and renew to him their oaths of fidelity.

He received them surrounded by 600 of his most faithful troops, who had the duty of keeping watch upon suspicious persons. Introduced into the centre of this menacing band, the deputies were obliged to submit to search that it might be made sure that they had no weapons. After this affront it is true that each of them received a present of eighty pieces of gold (nearly £80), but this first interview between the senate and the emperor did not inaugurate a reign of mutual confidence; and it will be shown that the rivals of Septimius always found partisans among the Conscript Fathers.

The murderers of Pertinax had been already beheaded; the other prætorians Septimius ordered to come and meet him at a designated place, where the legions of Illyria silently surrounded them, while another band went by unfrequented roads to take possession of the real citadel of imperial Rome, their entrenched camp between the Viminal and Colline gates. When secure of having them at his mercy, he ascends his tribunal; he reproaches them angrily for their perfidy towards the late emperor, then orders them to lay down their arms[1] and accoutrements, even to their military belts. These useless soldiers, just now so vain in their

[1] That is to say, the short sword which they wore at the right side; their fighting arms they had left in the camp, in the *armamentarium*.

splendid array, who had so often brought terror to emperor and senate and people, were thus conquered without the striking of a blow. Degraded amidst the derision of the legionaries, mocked by the people, who saw these formidable giant-killers reduced to their mere tunics, they escaped as best they could to places of refuge; penalty of death was pronounced against any who, after a certain number of days, should be found within the hundredth mile-stone from Rome; and some took their own lives from shame.

The prætorian cohorts were disbanded. But Severus quickly reconstituted them out of different material. Up to his time they had been recruited chiefly from Italy;[1] he decreed that, as a reward for military services, picked men from all the legions should be enrolled there. This was a wise measure; the guards of modern sovereigns are thus composed. Since, for more than a century, the provinces had given emperors to Rome, it was natural that they should also furnish prætorians. Severus employed the new cohorts in all his wars, but he left them the character of a permanent garrison of Rome, and so the danger remained the same. We shall see whether he augmented it, indeed, by raising the number of the prætorians to 40,000.

"At the city's gates," says Dion Cassius, "Severus dismounted from his horse, and laid aside his military dress before entering Rome; but his whole army followed him into the city. It was the most imposing sight I ever saw. Throughout the city were garlands of flowers and laurel-wreaths; the houses, adorned with hangings of different colours, were resplendent with the fire of sacrifices and the light of torches. The citizens, clad in white, filled the air with acclamations, and the soldiers advanced in martial order, as if at a triumph. We senators headed the procession, wearing the insignia of our rank."[2]

Meanwhile emissaries of the new ruler, scattered through the crowd, related all the signs that had been given him of his approaching honours. Soldiers are fatalists, and have need to be so; Severus firmly believed in presages, but he especially wished

[1] Also they were drawn from Spain, Macedonia, and Noricum. (Dion, lxxiv. 2.)

[2] Dion, lxxiv. 1. This writer, of more value for this reign than for those preceding it, is now our principal authority. Gibbon has yielded too much to the temptation of employing Herodian's rhetoric in adorning his history.

men to believe in those which were favourable to himself. In his *Memoirs*, which are lost to us, he related with complacency the celestial signs, the dreams and oracles which had predicted his fortune, and he caused them to be represented in pictures which he exhibited in Rome, in order to show the world that the gods themselves had announced, and therefore had decreed, the advent of the new imperial dynasty.

Dion is right in representing to us the entry of Severus into Rome as a triumph. It was in fact the definitive victory and this time the open victory of the military power; but to the honour of Severus it was a victory unaccompanied by tears. Only a small number of guilty persons had perished.[1]

Funeral Pile of Pertinax. (Large Bronze.)

The character of the new reign was soon revealed. Vainly did Severus show himself very civil towards the senate,[2] declare that he should take Marcus Aurelius and Pertinax for his examples, and solemnly promise that he would never put to death a member of the high assembly; the licence of the soldiery proved what these words were worth. Feeling that they were the victors of the day, they treated Rome like a conquered city. They established themselves in the temples and palaces and porticoes as if they were taverns, took whatever they wanted, and when called upon for payment, drew their swords. While Severus, surrounded by his armed friends, was haranguing the Conscript Fathers in the curia, the soldiers with shouts and threats came to demand from the senate 10,000 sesterces apiece. This was what the soldiers of Octavius received, and the army now felt that they had won a second battle of Actium and merited a like recompense. Much as Severus had

[1] Spartian says (*Sev.*, 8) that the friends of Julianus, accused in the senate by Severus, were despoiled of their estates and put to death. Dion says only: *τοὺς μὲν χαιρουργήσαντας τὰ κατὰ τὸν Περτινακα ἔργον θανάτῳ ἐζημίωσε* (lxxiv. 1), and speaks of no further executions until those of the civil war. It was probably at that time that the senator Julius Solon perished. (*Ibid.*, 2.)

[2] Civil he almost always was, at least in words. In the case of a *relatio* which he made later to the senate, on a question of civil law, he said: *cui rei obviam ibitur, patres conscripti, si censueritis* (*Fragm. Vatic. jur. Rom.* of Cardinal Mai, No. 158). Hubner (*de Senatus populique Romani actis*, pp. 75 *et seq.*) gives the chronological list of the emperor's communications to the senate.

already given them,[1] he was with great difficulty able to content them with 1,000 sesterces apiece.

A few days later funeral honours were paid to Pertinax. Severus had ordered a shrine to be erected to his predecessor, that he should have a statue of gold in the circus, and that in all

Pertinax Deified.[2]

prayers and oaths his name should be invoked. In the forum an edifice was constructed with a peristyle adorned with ivory and gold, in which was placed the image of Pertinax arrayed in triumphal robes on a couch covered with tapestry of purple and gold. As if he had only been asleep, a handsome young slave kept away the flies from the waxen face with a fan of peacock's

[1] Spart., *Sev.*, 5.

[2] Statue in Pentelic marble, on which the antique head is set on. (Museum of the Louvre; Clarac, No. 466.)

feathers. "The emperor and we, the senators, with our wives, all arrayed in mourning garments, seated ourselves around this building, the women under the porticoes, we in the open space, and the procession began to move. First were carried the figures of

Procession of the Knights at an Emperor's Funeral.[1]

Romans venerated since the earliest times; then followed choirs of boys and men singing a funeral hymn; then bronze busts representing all the conquered peoples in their national costumes. Then were borne the busts of those who had distinguished themselves by their discoveries, then the standards of corporations,[2] the

[1] Bas-relief from the Antonine column, representing the procession of the knights at the funeral of Antoninus. (Vatican.)

[2] . . . . ἀνδρῶν . . . . οἷς τι ἔργον ἢ καὶ ἐξεύρημα ἢ καὶ ἐπιτήδευμα λαμπρὸν ἐπέπρακτο . . . . καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ πόλει συστήματα (Dion, lxxiv. 4). This singular passage will be noticed, and the presence in this procession of corporations or trades; these two phrases confirm what we have said of the importance of the humble trades at Rome. In the triumphs of Gallienus and Aurelian in Rome, in the entry of Constantine into Autun, the *collegia*, preceded by their banners (*vexilla*), had their place in the procession. (Hist. Aug., *Gall.*, 8, and *Aurel.*, 34; *Panegyrici veteres*, viii. 8: . . . . *omnium signa collegiorum.*)

infantry, the cavalry, the horses of the circus, and lastly, a gilded altar adorned with ivory and precious stones.

"After this imposing procession, Severus ascended the rostra and read a eulogy on Pertinax, which we repeatedly interrupted with our acclamations. At its close we repeated our applause mingled with sobs and groans. The magistrates in charge then took up the funeral bed and gave it to the knights to carry it into the Campus Martius, where the funeral pile had been prepared. Some of us walked in advance; some smote upon their breasts; others sang a funereal chant to the sound of flutes; the emperor came last.

"The funeral pile, in the form of a tower of three stories, adorned with gold, ivory, and statues, bore on the top a gilded car driven by Pertinax. The bed having been placed upon the funeral pile with all that is usually placed near the dead, the emperor and the relatives of Pertinax kissed the waxen image. Then the magistrates with their insignia, the equestrian order, the cavalry and the infantry defiled past the spot (*decursio*); then the consuls applied the fire, and an eagle escaping from the flames rose into the skies. Thus Pertinax was raised to the rank of the immortals."[1]

Dion is a poor writer, but we have borrowed from him this page as representing the customs of the time. We remark that at imperial funerals the senators represented the hired mourners of humbler obsequies. This serious people were gratified with cries and gestures, a forced expression of grief or joy, even when neither the grief nor the joy were sincere; and their descendants love them still.

Of the new emperor's two rivals, Albinus and Niger, one had been kept inactive by deceitful promises, and the other, at the head of nine legions and numerous auxiliaries, had been acknowledged by all of Roman Asia, and in the Greek cities was already coining money with Latin legends promising him victory and eternity, *Æternitas Augusta* and *Invicto Imperatori*.[2] He had even set foot in Europe by the occupation of Byzantium, and his troops were marching upon Perinthus.

[1] Dion, lxxiv. 4 and 5. Cf. the account given by Herodian (iv. 3) of the funeral of Severus.
[2] Eckhel, vii. p. 154, and Cohen, iii. pp. 213 and 217, Nos. 1 and 26.

Respect for adversaries was not a virtue of the ancients; the rival emperors insulted each other like Homeric heroes before the combat. "He is only a mountebank of Antioch," Severus said of his rival. But in reality he valued the other's abilities very

Pescennius Niger, laurelled. (Gold Coin.)

The Augustan Eternity.[1]

The Invincible Emperor.[2]

highly,[3] and considered him a formidable adversary. Niger, in fact, a soldier of fortune, had passed through all the grades, meriting the praise of Marcus Aurelius, of Commodus, and even of Severus himself. He was a vigilant guardian of discipline. On one occasion he condemned two tribunes to be stoned who had secured some profit out of the commissariat department,[4] and had it not been for the entreaties of the army he would have beheaded some soldiers who had stolen a fowl. On another occasion his legionaries demanded wine. "You have water," he said to them, "is not that enough?" Never under his command did the soldiery require wood, or oil, or forced labour from the people of the provinces. In Rome, where men remembered that he was an Italian, Niger found partisans,[6] and his affable manners had made him popular wherever he had held command. Dion doubtless ascribes to the crowd his own sentiments and those of a portion of the senate when he shows the people, after a quarrel with the soldiers of Julianus, calling Niger

Saeculo frugifero.[5] (Reverse of a Large Bronze of Albinus.)

[1] Reverse of a denarius of Pescennius Niger: a crescent and seven stars.

[2] Reverse of a silver coin of Pescennius Niger; legend: INVICTO IMP. TROPHAEA, surrounding a trophy.

[3] Spartian (*Nig.*, 4 and 5) asserts that during an illness at the beginning of the war, Severus wished, if he should die, to have Niger for his successor, and that, after his first successes, he offered the latter *tutum exilium si ab armis recederet*.

[4] See, later, the letter of Severus to Celsus. Spartian also gives a letter from Marcus Aurelius very honourable to Niger.

[5] "To the Fruitful Age." Felicity standing, holds a caduceus and a cornucopia.

[6] Spart., *Nig.*, 3; *ibid.*, 2: . . . . *Romæ fautum est a senatoribus.* His father had been *curator* at Aquinum. He himself had begun his career by the rank of centurion.

to the aid of the Republic. In any case, one good sword was of more value than all the wishes of the people-king, and if they expressed any on this subject, they did but irritate Severus without being of use to Niger. Indolence has been ascribed to the governor of Antioch and the effeminate Syrian provinces; but even before his rival had quitted Rome, the prompt and well-judged measures of Niger had assured to him Asia and Egypt, had opened Europe, had guaranteed the neutrality of the Armenians, the succour of the princes and Arab chiefs of Mesopotamia, and even alliances beyond the Tigris.[1] He had not, therefore, in the delights of Daphne forgotten the terrible part which he had resolved to play.

Liberalitas Augusta. (Reverse of a Coin of Septimius Severus.[2]

Severus had directed his lieutenants to organize resistance in Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece, and a legion sent into Africa guarded for him that granary of Rome. However, he had not a moment to lose; and so, thirty days after his entrance into Rome, he left it, "to reduce to order the Oriental provinces." He left behind him a distrustful senate, but a people glutted with feasts and rejoicing in an abundant harvest.[3] For more than a month his troops had been on the march towards the Propontis. They arrived in time to save Perinthus, and drive the enemy back into Byzantium, which was at once blockaded by Marius Maximus.[4] Negotiations opened by

[1] The Parthian king had promised aid; the king of Atra had sent him archers; the Adiabenians and some independent tribes had declared for him. (Spart., *Sev.*, 9; Herod., iii. 1.)

[2] Gold coin; Liberality bearing a *tessera* and a cornucopia. (Cohen, iii. 253.)

[3] For this same year, 193, we have coins of Albinus and of Niger with the legend: *Sæculo frugifero, Cereri frugiferæ.*

[4] Upon the question whether this Marius Maximus should be identified with the historian of that name so often quoted in the *Augustan History*, see Borghesi, vol. v. p. 475; Henzen, 5,502; L. Renier, Spon's ed., p. 397; and, for the opposite opinion, Budinger, *Untersuchungen zur Röm. Kaiserg.*, vol. iii. pp. 30–33. The lieutenant of Severus commanded with the title of *dux* a corps drawn from the legions of the two Mœsias. This title, which we meet for the first time under Hadrian, a title which in the time of the Gordians made part of the official hierarchy, designates not an imperial legate at the head of the legions of his government, but a general intrusted with the command of a special expedition, but with no other *imperium* than that which he exercised over his soldiers. Cf. Borghesi, vol. v. p. 462. Under Marcus Aurelius, Candidus, another lieutenant of Severus, had been *præpositus copiarum*. (Orelli, No. 798, and vol. iii. p. 78.) Two other inscriptions, in Gruter (p. 389, 2), and in Marini (*Iscriz. Alb.*, p. 50), give the title of *dux* to Tib. Cl. Candidus and to L. Fabius Cilo in the time of Septimius Severus. No earlier mention of this title is known. (L. Renier, Spon's ed. of 1858, p. 209. Cf. Henzen, *Annali*, vol. xxii. p. 40.) The principal lieutenant of Niger was the

Niger having failed,[1] the rest of the army crossed the Hellespont in the fleets of Ravenna and Misenum, and it does not appear that Niger disputed their passage. A victory was gained by them near Cyzicus, and then a second in the neighbourhood of Nicæa, in which engagement Niger commanded in person.

Five centuries earlier Alexander had conquered near this spot, making himself master of Asia Minor. The double defeat of Niger now threw him back, as Darius had been driven after the battle of the Granicus, across the Taurus. In the gorges of the mountains he made entrenchments at the Cilician Gates, which he believed would be impregnable; but a torrent, swollen by a violent rain, made a breach through which the Illyrians entered. In a third action, near Issus, the Asiatic legions, notwithstanding the advantage of number and of position, could not sustain the onset, and lost 20,000 men. Niger fled to Antioch, and was proposing to seek an asylum among the Parthians when he was seized and beheaded. His head, carried into the camp before Byzantium, was exhibited to the besieged, but the sight did not intimidate them (194). As in almost all engagments between the legions of Europe and Asia, the latter were conquered.

Pescennius Niger.[2]

Severus seems not to have been present at any of these engagements, not through fear, but through confidence in his generals, and doubtless in order to remain within reach of couriers from Gaul and Italy who might bring him news of some storm gathering in the west.[3]

proconsul of Asia, Asellius Æmilianus, who was killed at Cyzicus. (Dion, lxxiv. 6. Cf. Waddington, *Fastes des prov. asiat.*, p. 245.)

[1] He demanded a share of the Empire, but Severus would grant nothing except *tutum exilium* (Spart., *Nig.*, 5).

[2] Engraved stone (red jasper, 31 mill. by 22). *Cabinet de France*, No. 2,099. In the upper part an altar; in the midst of flames, the serpent of Æsculapius. In the field, two inscriptions, thus interpreted by Charles Lenormant: To Æsculapius, Julius Sabinus, diviner, has consecrated (this stone), for the health of the Emperor Cæsar Caius Pescennius Niger, the Just." The intaglio is, therefore, an *ex-voto*. Cf. *Trésor de Numismatique, Icon. rom.*, pl. xli. p. 75, and Chabouillet, *op. cit.* pp. 272–3.

[3] He seems to have remained for some time at Perinthus, a city well selected under the

Many Eastern cities involved themselves in this civil war, for the purpose of gratifying those local feuds and inveterate jealousies to which all history bears witness. Thus Nicæa, Laodicea, Tyre, and Samaria took sides with Severus, because Nicomedia, Antioch, Berytus, and Jerusalem had declared for his rival. In Palestine the Jews and Samaritans fought with one another fiercely. In the west Albinus found 150,000 Britons, Gauls, and Spaniards to follow his fortunes, while others followed the fortunes of Severus.

Coin of the Colony of Laodicea.[1]

Thus it happened every time that the imperial authority was divided. Without Rome and a unity of command the world would have fallen back into chaos—a truth never to be lost sight of in Roman history and the justification of the Roman Empire.

Niger being overthrown his partisans were punished and his adversaries rewarded, after the customary procedure and in the spirit of all ages. Antioch, which had struck coins in honour of the Asiatic imperator, lost her privileges and her title of metropolis, which Laodicea inherited for the entire reign of Severus.[2] This city, Tyre, Heliopolis or Baalbec, and others obtained the titles of colonies with the *jus Italicum*.[4] Severus however pardoned the Jews who had declared for Niger;[5] but Nablous lost its citizenship, while Samaria obtained the rank and privileges of a Roman colony.

Coin of Antioch, in the Name of Pescennius Niger.[3]

circumstances, whence he could keep watch at once over Europe and Asia. Cf. Eckhel, ii. 41; iv. 440.

[1] SEP(timia) COL. LAVD. METRO(polis), in four lines, surrounded with a wreath of olive leaves. Reverse of a bronze coin of Laodicea under Geta.

[2] Eckhel, iii. 200. According to Malalas (*Chronogr.*, xii. p. 294), he authorized the inhabitants of Laodicea to take his name, Septimius; he made them very great largesses, instituted gratuitous distributions, *παρέσχεν αὐτοῖς σιτωνικὰ χρήματα πολλά*, constructed in their city a hippodrome, a cynegion, hot baths, a hexastoon, and gave the senatorial laticlave, *ἀξίας συγκλητικῶν*, to all of their most notable citizens who survived, *ἀξιωματικοῖς*.

[3] ΑΥΤΟΚ. ΚΑΙΣΑΡ Γ. ΠΕΣΚΕ. ΝΙΓΡΩ Δ, around a laurelled head of P. Niger. On the reverse: ΠΡΟΝΟΙΑ ΘΕΩΝ, *the Providence of the gods*, and an eagle. Silver coin.

[4] *Dejest*, l. 15, 1.

[5] *Palæstinis pœnam remisit* (Spart., *Sev.*, 14). Coins exist of Cæsarea and Jerusalem bearing the name of Niger. Cf. de Saulcy, *Numism. de la terre sainte*.

The siege of Byzantium, which lasted about three years,[1] has remained as famous in history as those of Tyre and Carthage, of Rhodes and Jerusalem. Dion describes the massive walls of the city, its towers furnished with formidable engines, its harbour closed by a chain and also made secure from attack by the current of the Bosphorus, lastly, its ships with double rudder which, changing direction without making an evolution, fell suddenly upon the Roman galleys from which they had appeared to flee, and broke their beaks. The superiority of defensive warfare was at that time so great that this city, surrounded by a numerous army and threatened by all the fleets of the Empire, could not be taken by assault. It was necessary to wait until famine forced these brave men to lay down their arms. A great number perished in attempt at escape at the last; the remainder, having fed on all possible food, even to human flesh, opened the gates. The chiefs and soldiers were butchered, the walls broken down, and Byzantium, reduced from its rank of a free city, became a mere village in the territory of Perinthus. A fellow-countryman of Dion, the engineer Priscus, had directed this gallant defence. He was like the rest condemned to death, but Severus pardoned him to attach him to his service.

Coin of Jerusalem, in the Name of Pescennius Niger.[2]

The friends of the claimant shared therefore in his misfortunes, as they would have done in his success. Niger would not have been more clement, for after the battle of Cyzicus he had ordered his Moorish cavalry[3] to sack the cities which had declared for his antagonist. But Severus, still faithful to his oath, put to death no man of senatorial rank;[4] they were despoiled of their

[1] From the middle of 193 to the spring of 196.

[2] IMP. CÆS. C. PESC. NIGER IVS(tus) AVG. surrounding the laurelled head of Pescennius Niger. On the reverse: COL. AEL. CAP. COMM(odiana) P(ia) F(elix). The genius of Ælia Capitolina Commodiana (Jerusalem), bearing in the right hand a human head. Bronze coin. (De Saulcy, pl. v. fig. 7.) Coins of Tarsus and Ægæ, in Cilicia, prove that these cities also took the name of Commodus.

[3] We have still the epitaph of a Sidonian killed in this "war of the Moors." Cf. de Saulcy, *Deux inscr. de Saïda*.

[4] Τῶν δὲ δὴ βουλευτῶν τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀπ. ετεινε μὲν οὐδένα (Dion, lxxiv. 8). Spartian (*Sev.*, 9) says that one only perished: but as he copies without criticism the information which his reading furnished him, he contradicts himself three times in one passage.

possessions and banished into the islands. Others, who had furnished money, paid a fine of fourfold. Dion accuses Severus of having revived the trade of the informers and of having condemned the innocent. His text, which is extremely mutilated in this place, does not permit us to discuss this fact, which indeed would

Septimius Severus. (Bust found at Porto d'Anzio; Capitol, Gallery, No. 3.)

not have surprised a people habituated by long usage to political vengeances. But another conclusion may be drawn from the following incident. Cassius Clemens, a senator, being called before the tribunal of the ruler, said in his defence: "I neither knew you nor Niger; finding myself in his party, I yielded to necessity, not for the purpose of fighting against you, but of dispossessing Julianus.

I therefore was pursuing the same object as you. If, later, I did not abandon the chief whom the gods had given me, no more would you have wished that those of your party should abandon you and go over to your rival. Examine the matter in itself. Your decision against me will be a decision against yourself and your own friends, for posterity will say that you have made it a crime in us to have acted as you yourself have done." Severus, admiring his courage, deprived him of but one-fourth of his property: a partial justice which appeared a great indulgence. During the struggle he had been heard to say that he would pardon Niger if the latter would anticipate defeat by an abdication; and it is not certain that he would not have kept his word, for he contented himself after the victory with exiling from Rome the wife and children of his rival, and he respected the statues of Niger and their ostentatious inscriptions. "If these praises be just," he said to those who advised him to efface them, "and they are so, it is well to know what an enemy we have conquered." Lastly, he granted an amnesty to the soldiers, and restored to their homes a great number of them who had taken shelter with the Parthians. Severus was not therefore always the pitiless man he is represented in ordinary history. He ended by even granting favours to that city of Byzantium which had so long held his fortune in check. Its site was too remarkable for an intelligent ruler to leave it long in ruins.[1] He aided in rebuilding it, erected baths, a temple of the sun, another of Artemis, an amphitheatre, a hippodrome, etc., being scrupulous to buy, says an old writer, from their owners the houses or gardens he required in his new buildings.[2] He granted them aid from the army treasury, and permitted the city to take the name of his son. Up to the time of Caracalla's death Byzantium was called the Antonine city.[3] The stern judge of the allies of Niger made himself the benefactor of subjects returning to their allegiance.

[1] . . . . *situmque loci amœnum contemplatus, Byzantium instauravit* (*Chron. Alex., ad ann.* 195, and Malalas, xii. p. 291, edit. of Bonn).

[2] . . . . ἀγοράσας οἰκήματα (*ibid.*). Malalas and the *Chron. of Alexandria* perhaps go too far in one direction; Dion goes equally far in an opposite direction when he affirms (lxxiv. 14) that Severus confiscated the lands of the inhabitants, which cannot be true, since Byzantium continued to exist and he did not send a colony to it.

[3] ἡ πόλις Ἀντωνινία (Hesychius Milesius, in C. Müller's *Frag. Hist. Græc.*, vol. iv. p. 153.

Philostratus[1] gives another proof of his spirit of justice, and it was a citizen of Byzantium who profited by it. The siege of the city was still in progress when one of its inhabitants, a famous actor, merited at the Amphictyonic games the prize for tragic declamation. The judges dared not give it to him, and the matter was reported to Severus, who ordered the prize to be conferred. The matter is a trifle, but among the ancients an act of justice like this was not of common occurrence.

Septimius Severus, on a Coin of Smyrna.[2]

During the siege of Byzantium, Severus had regulated the affairs of Syria and punished the people of Osrhoene, although they boasted of having murdered the fugitives of Issus who had taken refuge with them. The Empire kept up a few garrisons on the further side of the Euphrates. To re-affirm in these countries the imperial authority, which had been somewhat impaired by the civil war, and to punish the allies whom Niger had found there, the emperor led his legions into Upper Mesopotamia, where, since the great expedition of Cassius in 165, no Roman army had appeared; and he sent his generals still further, who easily got the better of the Arabs and Adiabenians on the two banks of the Tigris. It was for his interest to smother the noise of civil war by the resounding clamour of victories gained in foreign lands. But he was too

No. 1. Gold Coin commemorative of Victories over the Parthians, Arabs, and Adiabenians.[3]

No. 2. Bronze struck in memory of the same Victories.[3]

[1] *Vitæ Soph.*, ii. 27.

[2] AV. KA. CE. CEOVHPOC II. (Autocrator Cæsar Septimius Severus Pertinax). Laurelled bust of Septimius Severus. On the reverse: ЕПІ СТРА. КА. СТРАТОNЕІКОУ СМУРNАІΩN (*Under the Strategus Claudius Stratonicus*, coin of the people of Smyrna). Turreted Cybele seated, the left elbow resting on the tympanum, holding in the right hand two figures of Nemesis; at her feet, a lion. Bronze. (Mionnet, No. 1,342.)

[3] Captives at the foot of a trophy, with the legend: PART. ARAB. PART. ADIAB. COS. II PP. The bronze coin has, as usual, the signature of the senate: S.C. (Cohen, No. 537.)

prudent to go far into those remote regions until he had regulated the affairs of the western provinces. He himself went no further than Nisibis, a stronghold which the Parthians had given to the Jews, who were numerous in those countries, and it had been carefully fortified by them.[1] Situated on the lower slopes of Mount Masius, half-way between the Euphrates and the Tigris, Nisibis was destined to be the centre of defence for this region, and at once the bulwark of Syria and of Southern Armenia against the Parthians and Persians.

Captive Parthian. (Bas-relief from the Antonine Column.)

This war had assumed no very great proportions,[2] and whatever Dion may say of the occupation of Nisibis, "which costs more than it brings in," the policy was wise. Thus to terminate one civil war on the eve of another which could easily be foreseen was to act as a ruler should who has interests of his Empire well in mind.

Severus was still in Mesopotamia in the spring of 196, whence

Silver Coin giving Albinus the title of Augustus. (Cohen, No. 42.)

Coin of Albinus struck at Sidon.[3]

news of the surrender of Byzantium reached him. This news decided his return to Europe, whither, besides, he was recalled by the anxieties which Albinus was beginning to cause him. He had adopted the latter as his son,[4] had granted him the title of

[1] Sainte-Croix, *Mém. sur le gouv. des Parthes*, p. 17.

[2] It gave Severus, however, the four salutations as imperator, which coins and inscriptions indicate for the year 195.

[3] C. ΚΑΘΔΙΟC ΑΛΒΕΙΝΟC ΚΑΙCA, around bare head of Albinus. On the reverse: CIΔHTΩN. Pallas and a female figure, with hands clasped, each holding a spear. Bronze.

[4] This at least is to be inferred from the name of Septimius which Albinus assumed, and the custom of the emperors when they conferred the title of Cæsar. Hence coins were struck in honour of Albinus at Hippo Libera, Sidon, and Smyrna. (Cohen, vol. iii., *ad fin. Alb.*)

Cæsar,[1] that is to say, of heir-presumptive, and had designated him to share with himself the consulship of the next year. Coins were struck in his honour with this title; statues were erected to him, and sacrifices offered in the name of the two emperors.[2] Before setting out for the East the emperor had written to him: "The State has need of a person like yourself, of illustrious birth and in the prime of life. I am old and suffer from the gout, and my sons are only boys."[3] But for three years Albinus had been left out of all important affairs. Severus had reserved for himself alone, even in respect to the smallest matters, the plenitude of the imperial power. It is possible that an inscription relating to works ordered by him, from far off in Asia, in an obscure city of Latium, may not be genuine;[4] but we have the text of a rescript which he sent from the shores of the Euphrates to Rome touching the guardianship of the property of minors.[6] Another conqueror took pleasure in dating his decrees from Warsaw or from Moscow, 600 leagues distant from his own

Antique Fragment of a Statue of Clodius Albinus (so-called).[5]

Eckhel thinks (vii. 165) that, if he had obtained this name of Severus, he had relinquished it after the rupture between them; but this reason does not seem sufficient.

[1] According to Capitolinus (*Alb.*, 2 and 6), Commodus, rendered anxious by the schemes of Severus, had already offered that title to Albinus, which the latter, foreseeing the approaching downfall of the emperor, and saying that Commodus was seeking companions in his ruin, had refused. The silence of Dion and of other writers does not allow us to accept this letter, which is, moreover, of so strange a character.

[2] For instance, the taurobolus of Lyons in 194. (Or.-Henzen, No. 6,032.)

[3] Herod., ii. 48. Caracalla was born in 188; Geta the year following.

[4] Spon, *Miscell.*, p. 270.

[5] Torso of Pentelic marble found near Civita Vecchia. The cuirass has a head of Medusa and under it a palladium, as if to say: I terrify and I protect. The statue (restored) is in the Vatican under the name of Clodius Albinus.

[6] *Digest*, xxvii. 9, 1. It was read in the senate June 13th, 195; others are dated from

capital. Albinus, who retained only useless marks of honour, saw the sons of Severus growing older, and it required but little foresight to understand that these boys, when they became men, would be formidable competitors to himself. His three legions of Britain were devoted to him; those of Gaul and Spain,[1] which alone of all the armies had never made an emperor, must have been desirous to associate themselves with the fortune of a new ruler. At Rome, the former friends of Pescennius, and all those who were distrustful of Severus, turned their hopes towards Albinus. His illustrious birth was spoken of; the gentleness of this Cæsar was contrasted with the harshness of the Augustus; it was believed that under him the senate would recover its authority,[2] and some of the most important of the senators advised him to take advantage of the difficulties of Severus in the East to lay hands upon Rome and Italy. The letters found later among the papers of Albinus reveal these secret intrigues. Medals even give us reason to think that a certain number of the Conscript Fathers went to join Albinus, and then a counter-senate was established, as formerly

Viminacium (*Code*, iv. 19, 1), and from Eboracum (*Code*, iii. 32, 1); but in the case of the latter there is an error, either as to the date, July 22nd, 205, or else as to the place where it is said to have been issued.

[1] Borghesi (*Œuvres complètes*, iv. 265) counts thirty-three legions, in the reign of Severus, of whom four were in Germany and one in Spain. Which side these five legions took we do not know, but we know that the partisans of Albinus were numerous in Gaul and south of the Pyrenees, since after the battle of Lyons there were still disturbances in these provinces, and, according to Spartian (*Sev.*, 12), *Hispanorum et Gallorum proceres multi occisi sunt.* Severus must in the beginning have attached to his party the legions of Upper Germany, adjacent to his own, and we see that his army entered Gaul by way of Germany. But we cannot doubt that Albinus early began to intrigue with the legions of Lower Germany, so close to Britain, and where he had probably been in command. Cf. Roulez, *les Légats des provinc. de Belg. et de Germ. Infér.*, p. 44. The passage of Capitolinus (*Alb.*, 1) would prove that the legions of Gaul, those, at least, of the Lower Rhine, had made common cause with the army of Britain. Two facts are certain: Severus, at the head of his prætorian guard and the contingents that he had been able to obtain from the twenty-seven legions stationed in the countries under his power, was near failing in the struggle; and for Albinus, who was victorious several times, to have been able at the last moment to put his rival in great danger, it must have been the case that he had, not merely tumultuous levies from Gaul and Spain, but well-organized forces in considerable number. Dion speaks of 150,000 men in array on each side. The figures given by the ancient authors can never be absolutely accepted; but we have the right to conclude from what Dion says that the forces on both sides were equal, and that they were numerous.

[2] See the discourse, so republican or rather so senatorial, attributed by Capitolinus (13) to Albinus. It is impossible that words like these were ever spoken before an army, but they have been ascribed to Albinus on account of his well-known sentiments in respect to the importance of the senatorial order.

had been done by Pompey in Greece and Scipio in Africa, and as later Postumus did in Gaul.[1]

Severus could not be unaware of these dispositions of the Roman nobles, and he must have distrusted them for many years, although Albinus in 195 had sent him large sums of money to aid in succouring the cities ruined by Niger. As he was on his way back to Italy through the valley of the Danube, there reached him, when near Viminacium, news from Britain and from Rome which decided him to precipitate the inevitable rupture:[2] doubtless the announcement that Albinus had assumed the title of Augustus and was preparing to come down into Gaul. Severus had just emerged victorious from two wars, and had twice traversed the richest provinces of the Empire; he had given his soldiers military fame and he could give them gold. Therefore he had but little trouble in inducing them to declare Albinus a public enemy, and to proclaim his own son Cæsar and *Princeps Juventutis* under the name of Aurelius Antoninus.[4] He himself had already taken the designation of the "son of Marcus Aurelius."[5] "At last he has found a father," men said, hurt at this victory of a parvenu.[6] But it was no mere taking of a name. The act must

Septimius Severus and his Eldest Son Caracalla.[3]

[1] Cf. Eckhel, vii. 165, and Spart., *Sev.*, 11.

[2] Spartian attributes this rupture to Albinus; Dion, to Severus; in either case, it was inevitable. It occurred earlier than June 30th, 196, for we have a rescript of that date signed Severus and Caracalla (*Code*, iv. 19, 1). The compilers of Justinian's time gave Caracalla the title of Augustus in it. But this is an error which they often committed in the case of this prince. We must use with prudence the dates furnished by the *Pandects*. Eckhel (vii. 387) says, speaking of these laws signed by the emperors: . . . . *harum testimonia quam sint infirma, satis compertum.*

[3] Intaglio of 27 mill. by 40; sardonyx of three layers. *Cabinet de France*, No. 2,100. Severus and Aurelius Antoninus are both laurelled and wear the *paludamentum*. This engraved stone merits, both by the beauty of the material and the excellence of the workmanship, to be placed beside the cameo representing the family of Severus. See later, p. 69.

[4] Eckhel, vii. pp. 169 and 173; Dion, lxxv. 7; Spart., *Sev.*, 10. At this time first appeared the formula: *imperator destinatus*. Cf. L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Algérie*, No. 1,826.

[5] A coin of the year 195, in which Severus bears the title of the son of Marcus Aurelius, represents him holding in his hand a victory and crowned by Rome. (Cohen, iii. p. 298.)

[6] Dion, lxxvi. 9.

have been preceded by a veritable adoption with all legal forms, for Severus insisted that it should have all civil consequences. Naturally there was missing at the ceremony the principal actor, namely, the adoptive father, who had been dead for fifteen years. But in some way or another imperial omnipotence obviated this

Clodius Albinus.[1]

difficulty, as Galba had done in the case of Piso, whom he adrogated[2] without curiate assembly, in virtue of his office of Pontifex Maximus, and as Nerva had done in the case of the absent Trajan, although the presence and the consent of the person adopted were necessary. Severus was also Pontifex Maximus, and

[1] Bust in the Campana Museum, found in the Roman Campagna. (Henry d'Escamps, *Descr. des Marbres du Musée Campana*, No. 103.)

[2] In respect to the *adoptio* and *adrogatio*, see vol. v. p. 247. After the time of Diocletian the *adrogatio* was made by mere imperial rescript. (*Code*, vii. 48, 2.)

what was legal in the case of a person absent was equally so in respect to one who was dead. Henceforth in the inscriptions of Severus, above all his other titles comes his descent from the Antonines,[1] and his sepulchral urn was deposited in their tomb.

This strange conduct had a double motive. Severus designed to draw upon his family the splendour of the most illustrious of the imperial dynasties, the famous Antonines, whom poets now raised higher than the very gods;[2] and he also wished, at the same stroke, to seize upon the vast estates that five generations of emperors, following each other in hereditary succession, had bequeathed to Commodus. On the death of this emperor an immense fortune had passed to his three sisters, and Severus, rendered anxious by such great wealth in the hands of private individuals, had taken part of it at once, as political inheritor, and he proposed to secure the rest proximately as civil heir, by making himself the son of Aurelius. Thus in a day the poorest of the emperors became the richest.[3]

This act had serious results. As long as Severus bore only the name of Pertinax, which was dear to the senate, this assembly, not without some distrust, allowed events to take their course, without attempting, even by the expression of a wish, to modify them. But to call himself the brother of an emperor whom the Conscript Fathers held in execration, and rehabilitate his accursed memory, was to justify his acts and accept also as an inheritance his hatred towards the nobles. From that day fear and anger brooded over the curia, and the senate, in their thoughts, conspired for Albinus.

Was the rupture preceded, as has been asserted, by an attempt

[1] *M. Antonini Pii filius Commodi frater Antonini Pii nepos Hadriani pronepos, Trajani abnepos, Nervæ adnepos.* (L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.*, No. 3,277.) A daughter of Marcus Aurelius, *Vibia Aurelia Sabina*, is called a sister of Severus. (*Ibid.*, No. 2,718.) There has been lately discovered at Lamoricière, in the province of Oran, an inscription in which Severus is called the son of Marcus Aurelius. (*Comptes rendus de l'Acad. des inscr.*, 1882, p. 96.)

[2] Lamp., *Macr.*, 7.

[3] Up to the time of his consulship he had had in Rome only a very small house and a little landed property, *quum ædes brevissimas habuisset et unum fundum.* (Spartian, *Sev.*, 4.) The successor inherited the property of the dead emperor, even to legacies which, though made, had not yet been paid. (*Digest*, xxxvi. 56.) In this way the Flavians had inherited the Chersonesus, the property of the first Cæsars. (*C. I. L.*, iii. 726.) To manage that great fortune Severus instituted a *procuratio rerum privatarum* which became permanent. (*Ibid.*, 12.)

at assassination?[1] All men at that time held that a dagger thrust was a good way of simplifying a difficult question, and in this respect Severus felt like every one else. But men who stood exposed to surprises like these were accustomed to guard themselves carefully, and the procedure attributed to the emperor was so easily to be discovered that we may doubt if he employed it. Spartian and Dion make no mention of these emissaries sent with fictitious letters and poison who, according to the confession that torture always extorts, were to attract Albinus to a secret conference and stab him there, or else gain over his cook and have poison mingled with his food. The British Cæsar was too much interested in putting in circulation rumours of this kind for us not to suspect their authenticity.

Severus ordered everything for the approaching campaign with his usual promptitude. Troops hastened to guard the defiles of the Alps, while the bulk of his forces, still ascending the valley of the Danube, turned the mountains on the north and entered Gaul through the province of Upper Germany. He himself made a rapid journey to Rome,[2] where he caused the senate to confirm the army's declaration against Albinus, and also the elevation of Caracalla to the rank of Cæsar. He then returned to take command in person of his forces, who were advancing divided into two corps. A deputation sent some time after by the senate found Caracalla in Upper Pannonia, where his father had left him, and Severus in Upper Germany.[3]

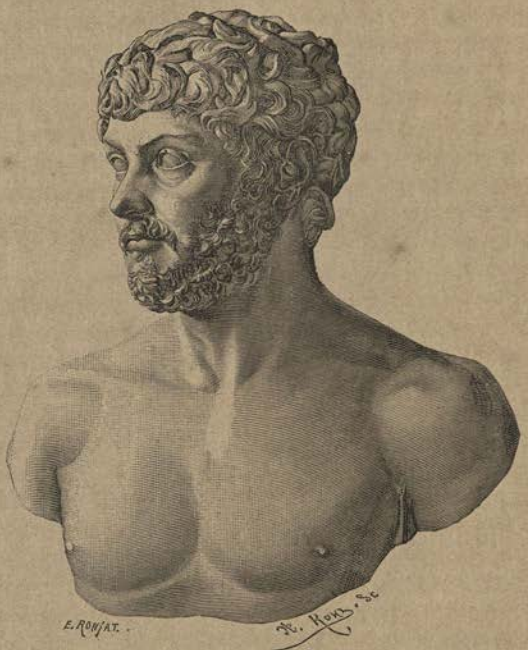
Dion relates a curious fact. A humble grammarian of Rome, fired with martial ardour, suddenly closed his school and betook himself to Gaul. He gave out that he was a senator intrusted by the emperor with the duty of levying an army; he raised troops and defeated many corps of the army of Albinus. Severus, under the idea that he was a senator, wrote to him congratulating him. Numerianus scoured the country, levied contributions on hostile cities, and collected over 17,000,000 drachmæ, which he sent to the emperor. The war being ended he presented himself before

[1] Capit., *Alb.*, 7, and Herod., iii.

[2] Eckhel, vii. 175; Cohen, iii. 275.

[3] L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.*, No. 1,826; *Mél. d'épigr.*, p. 163; Henzen, *Bull. de l'Inst. archéol.*, 1856, p. 88. The deputation mentioned in this inscription took place in 196.

Severus, and made known to him the truth. He was offered whatever he desired, but he even refused to enter the senate, and accepting only a small pension went to live in the country. Here we have a schoolmaster who was at once a philosopher and a man



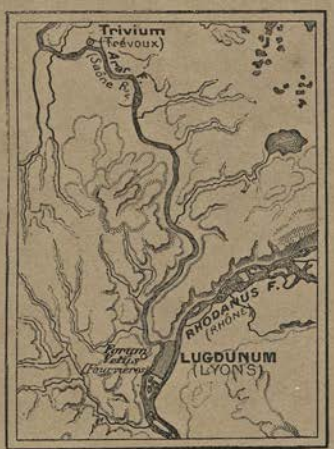
Clodius Albinus. (Bust of the Capitol, Hall of the Emperors, No. 49.)

of action; but what he was able to accomplish shows the great disorder of the times.

If we may believe Dion, 300,000 men, 150,000 on each side, were ready to join battle in Gaul. Rome with melancholy gaze followed these distant events. "While the world was shaken by this great shock," says the historian, "we remained sad and inactive. The people, even in their wonted amusements, manifested their grief. At the games of the circus I saw an immense multitude, but they paid no attention to the races, there was not a cry,

nor a word of encouragement to the charioteers. Suddenly out of the great silence, one voice cried: 'Peace, for the safety of the people!'" The senate and the city, powerless against these ambitious men, asked only repose under whichever master. It was, in a different form, the sentiment of Asinius Pollio before the battle of Actium: "I shall be the spoil of the victor."

An engagement in which the troops of Albinus had the advantage over the lieutenant of Severus preceded the main action, which took place on the banks of the Saône between Lyons and Trévoux. The army of Severus coming from the north-east faced southward, the forces of Albinus were drawn up facing the north. Since his accession to the throne Severus had directed all military operations from a distance, but this time he himself led his troops to the attack, for all his fortune was staked in this final encounter, and the treason that he was conscious of in his rear obliged him to conquer or perish. He did indeed risk his life, but a cavalry charge by Lætus decided the victory. The conquerors entered Lugdunum pursuing the fugitives. Albinus, on the point of falling into their hands, made an unsuccessful attempt to kill himself. He was taken before Severus, and the latter ordered his head to be cut off. Severus thus remained undisputed master of the Roman world (19th February, 197). Herodian well says: "That one man should have been able to destroy three competitors already in possession of power; that he should have destroyed one of these in his palace in Rome, the second far in the East, the third far in the West—this is a success almost unparalleled in history." [1]



L. Thuillier Del.

Lyons and its Environs.

[1] Herod., iii. 23. The expedition against Albinus occupied the latter months of 196 and

But the moment when Severus attained this fame is also that when he stained his name with blood.

On the news of the first successes gained by Albinus, the senate, believing the emperor ruined, had hastened to coin a silver

Septimius Severus. (Bust in the Museum of the Louvre.)

piece bearing the name of the new Augustus and to accord honours to his brother and near relatives.[1] On the part of people so circumspect this was a very great imprudence, which can only be explained by the arrival of some misleading bulletin from Albinus. Severus immediately wrote to them expressing his regret at

the first two of 197. Dion gives us an exact date for the middle point of hostilities, the incident of which he has just spoken occurring on the eve of the Saturnalia, that is to say, December 16th, 196.

[1] Spart., *Sev.*, 11; Capit., *Alb.*, 9; Cohen, iii. p. 227. The senate could only coin copper pieces; to coin silver was therefore a usurpation on their part.

becoming aware of their preference for Albinus. He had liberally provided for the city, he said; he had made many wars for the Republic, and by Niger's death had delivered them from tyranny. He then reproached them for their ingratitude towards himself in accepting as their emperor an adventurer from Hadrumetum who claimed to be of the family of the Ceionii. From this man they expected consulships and commands, a trickster skilful in imposture. To him they no doubt proposed to offer a triumph as to an illustrious conqueror; and he ended the letter with expressions of contempt for the literary claims of his rival.[1] Before subduing him by force of arms, Severus desired to render Albinus an object of ridicule, depriving him of the ancestry which the latter claimed and of the talents for which others gave him credit—two sources of pride which he himself enjoyed.

Albinus. (Vatican, Hall of Busts.)

After the battle of Lyons came a still more terrible message: the head of Albinus set up on a spear in front of the curia, and these words, concluding a threatening letter: "It is thus that I treat those who offend me." Severus himself soon appeared in the senate (June, 197). "He commended the severities of Sylla, Marius, and Augustus, which had saved them, and blamed the moderation of Pompey and of Cæsar, which had been their ruin." He then apologized for Commodus, reproaching the senators for voting the latter infamous,[2]

[1] Capit., *Alb.*, 12. It is a question whether this letter is authentic. Dion (lxxv. 7) speaks of threatening letters, but quotes none; what we have of the addresses of Severus to the senate give us reason, however, to accept this as veritable.

[2] According to Dion, we may believe that it was not until this time that he declared the latter *divus*, ἡρωικὰς ἐδίδου τιμάς; an inscription of the year 196, in which Severus is spoken of as "the brother of the divine Commodus," proves that this emperor's apotheosis preceded the battle of Lyons. In assuming the position of son to Marcus Aurelius, at least from

they who themselves for the most part lived in a more infamous manner. At the conclusion of his address, which caused the senate great alarm,[1] a capital process was instituted against sixty-four senators accused of complicity in the designs of Albinus; thirty-five, proved innocent, resumed their seats, and Dion, who is not friendly to Severus, declares that the emperor behaved towards them as if they had never given him cause to doubt their fidelity; twenty-nine being condemned to death were executed.[2] Among this number was that Sulpicianus whom we saw, after the murder of Pertinax, chaffering for the Empire and kissing the hands stained with his son-in-law's blood. Partisans of Niger who had been spared up to this time now perished, his wife, children, and six of his near relatives: Severus settled all his accounts once for all.

These severities find, not their excuse, but their explanation in the dangers that the emperor had just passed through: before him, a formidable adversary supported by the forces of the Western provinces; behind him, in Italy, treason; in the East, a Parthian invasion and a military revolt, that of the Third Legion of Cyrenaica, which from its camps in Arabia could again set Syria in a blaze and renew Niger's alliance with the perpetual enemy of the Empire. This legion had proclaimed Albinus,[3] and in default of this general would doubtless have put forward one of the sons of Niger; and this was the condemnation of the rest of the party. Doubtless we must pity the victims of domestic discords, especially those involved by the fatality of birth. But if we had a little less compassion for the abettors of civil wars who perish by the conqueror's hand, and a little more for those who are sacrificed in these wars in the fulfilment of their duty as soldiers, we should place beside those twenty-nine senators executed at Rome for having played at the terrible game of revolution, the 30,000 or

the year 195, Severus accepted the obligation to rehabilitate the memory of his adoptive brother.

[1] *Μάλιστα δ' ἡμᾶς ἐξέπληξεν* (Dion, lxxv. 7).

[2] Dion, lxxv. 8. Spartian (*Sev.*, 13) enumerates forty-one persons who were put to death. Severus at first allowed the wife and the two (?) sons of Albinus to live, but later put them to death. According to law and custom all the property of the condemned was confiscated. We find, however, a Ceionius Albinus prefect of Rome under Valerian; the entire family was therefore not involved in the ruin of him who was defeated at Lyons.

[3] Spart., *Sev.*, 12.

40,000 corpses of Roman legionaries which covered the Lyonnese plains.[1]

Proscriptions were made in the Gallic provinces and in Spain. All who had aided Albinus paid with life or fortune for the crime of not being able to foresee which side would be victorious. One of these proscribed persons begged the emperor to spare him. "If the destiny of battle, O Cæsar, had been against you," this man said, "what would you have done in the position in which I am

The Divine House. (Septimius Severus and his Family.)[2]

now?" "I should have resigned myself," the emperor rejoined, "to suffer what you are about to endure." And he ordered the man's execution. "To destroy factions," Severus said, "one must once be cruel in order after that to be merciful for the rest of one's life."[3] Isolated cases of resistance[4] there were, especially in the Iberian peninsula, whither Severus sent one of his best generals, Tib. Claudius Candidus, the conqueror of Nicæa, to fight "by sea and land the rebels of the Citerior province."[5] Another inscription

[1] . . . . ἀμφοτέρωθεν ἀναριθμήτων πεσόντων (Dion, lxxv. 7).

[2] *Cabinet de France*, cameo, No. 249, sardonyx of three layers, 61 mill. by 101. One of the most valued of the collection. The execution, without being as perfect as that of the monuments of the first Cæsars, is still very remarkable. The laurel wreath of Caracalla with Geta's bare head fixes the date of this cameo between the years 198 and 209. Severus wears the paludamentum and the radiated crown; Julia Domna, the veil and diadem. Cf. Chabouillet, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

[3] Aur. Victor, *Cæs.*, 20.

[4] *Multi post Albinum fidem ei servantes bello a Severo superati sunt* (Spart., *Sev.*, 12).

[5] *C. I. L.*, ii. 4,114.

speaks of a tribune serving in the expedition undertaken "to crush the Gallic faction."[1]

Lyons had suffered from the great conflict which took place outside her walls; but she quickly effaced the traces of this, and made haste to show herself faithful to the conqueror. Two months and a half after the battle a sacrifice was offered there for "the safety of the emperor, of his son the Cæsar, first designated emperor, of the empress Julia Domna, the mother of the camps, and of all the divine house." During four days religion displayed its most imposing pomps for this solemnity, which sealed the reconciliation between the African dynasty and the Gallic nations.[2]

Com of Vologeses IV.[3]

In Rome, while twenty-nine senatorial families wept for their dead, the populace and the soldiers kept holiday. The latter had received large gifts of money; the former, a congiarium, *fêtes*, and gladiatorial shows,[4] to compensate them for not having enjoyed the spectacle of so many thousands of Romans butchered in the battles of the civil war.

Severus could now enjoy repose. The Roman world, twice visited and pacified; the Euphrates and Tigris crossed; the Rhine and Danube flowing peacefully beneath Roman standards: all things invited the ruler to turn his indefatigable activity towards the labours of peace. But, during the Gallic war, the king of the Parthians, Vologeses IV., had invaded Mesopotamia and besieged Nisibis, which a general, by name Lætus, had valiantly defended; and the revolt of the legion of Arabia proved that in the East

[1] *C. I. L.*, iii. 4,037. It is proper to say, however, that the date of this inscription cannot with certainty be fixed in the year 197.

[2] From the 4th to the 7th of May, 197. De Boissieu, *Inscr. de Lyon*, p. 36. Later, after the war with the Parthians, another solemn sacrifice was celebrated by the order and at the expense of the general assembly of Narbonensis, *pro salute dominorum impp.* (Gruter, xxix. 12.) In respect to this ceremony, see vol. v. pp. 703–4.

[3] Diadæmed head of Vologeses IV. On the reverse, ΒΑCΙΛΕ ΟΛΑΓΑCΟΥ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ ΑΞΔ ΑΠΕΛΛΑΙΟΥ (of the year 464, of the month Apellæus.) Tetradrachm.

[4] Cohen, iii. 259: *Munificentia Aug.* Severus renewed the prohibition for women to fight as gladiators. (Dion, lxxv. 16.)

the fires of civil war were not yet entirely extinct. Severus again assumed the cuirass, and with extreme diligence made all his preparations. Before withdrawing to so great a distance the principal forces of the Empire,[1] he recommended to his lieutenants vigilance upon the northern frontiers, authorizing them to make prudent concessions for the sake of preventing hostilities. We know, for example, that Lupus, one of his ablest generals, arrested by presents distributed among the chiefs an invasion of the mountaineers of Caledonia. Having taken these precautions Severus embarked on board the fleet at Brundusium and sailed to the Syrian coast; he crossed the Euphrates in time to gain by some victory his tenth salutation as imperator, before the close of the year 197.[2] A treaty with the king of Armenia, who gave him money and hostages, permitted him to advance without anxiety as to his rear.

Denarius commemorating the Tenth Salutation of Severus as Imperator.

To the Romans of that time the enemy *par excellence* was the Parthian. The heir of the Arsacidæ, the successor of Cyrus and of Alexander, alone in the known world was able to throw a shadow upon the imperial majesty of Rome. The deserts which protected this people, the death of Crassus and Antony's vain efforts, even the ephemeral successes of Trajan, made the Parthian king an inconvenient and hated neighbour. To conquer him was the great ambition of the military chiefs of Rome. We have often explained why this definitive victory was impossible. Severus resolved at least to inflict a rebuff upon this great Oriental empire, and close against it the approaches to Syria by rendering the passage of the Tigris difficult for the Parthian army. Vologeses did not await the emperor, but his generals engaged with the Romans several times, and one of these combats seems to have been a decisive victory for the latter.[3] The road to Ctesiphon was open, and Severus advanced.

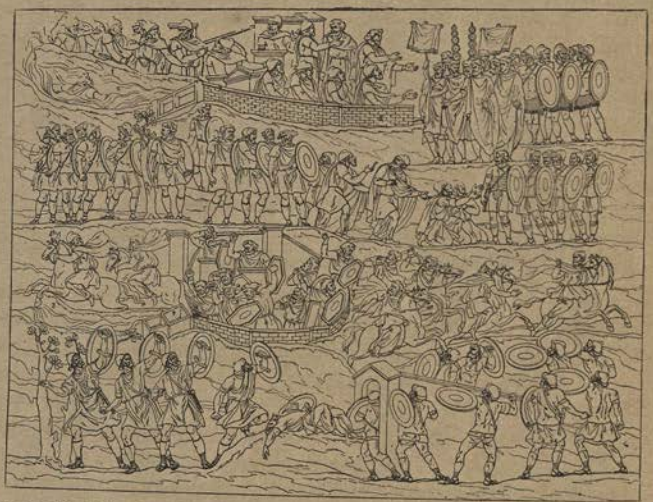
[1] He took a part of the prætorians (Dion lxxv. 10) with their prefect, C. Fulvius Plautianus (Orelli, No. 934), and borrowed detachments from the armies of Europe (Dion, lxxv. 12, and *C. I. L.*, iii. 1,193), and from Africa (L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.*, No. 1,182).

[2] Eckhel, vii. 176: *Profectio Aug.*; Momms., *Inscr. Neap.*, No. 1,410. In respect to this war Herodian confuses facts, names, dates, and geography.

[3] April, 198. This date is to be inferred from an inscription published by Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.*, No. 1,727.

Obtaining timber from a forest near the Euphrates, he constructed a fleet to convey his heavy baggage, while his soldiers advanced along the river bank. He arrived in this way at Babylon and Seleucia, no longer great except in name, and seized the royal city of the Parthians, taking away 100,000 captives. This was the third time within the century that the Romans had entered Ctesiphon.

The return through the valley of the Tigris was difficult on



The Parthian King escaping from Ctesiphon. (Bas-relief from the Arch of Septimius Severus.)

account of the scarcity of provisions and forage. Like Trajan, Severus besieged the stronghold of Atra[1] (El-Hadhr), whose king had made an alliance with Niger, and he failed as did his illustrious predecessor, notwithstanding the machines of the engineer Priscus. In the midst of this desert it was impossible for the besieging army to resort to a blockade, the great method of the

[1] A few days' march westward of the Tigris. Its ruins still exist, not, however, as Herodian says, on the top of a high hill. There are only low hillocks in the region and some calcareous rocks. Cf. Layard's *Nineveh*; this author visited El-Hadhr. Dion speaks of two sieges of Atra, or rather, of two attacks made upon the town: the one, perhaps, by one of the lieutenants of Severus; the other, by the emperor himself.

ancients for the reduction of a city. After twenty days of sharp attacks, the emperor raised the siege and withdrew through Upper Mesopotamia into the Syrian provinces, about the close of the year 198 or the beginning of the following year.

During this siege, in which the army endured great hardships, there was an instance of insubordination, and it became necessary to make an example. A prætorian tribune had repeated publicly and doubtless commented upon the lines which Virgil puts into the mouth of Drances, the partisan of peace at any price: "They take no account of us, and we perish for the ambition of one man." Severus had caused him to be put to death, and possibly the punishment was merited. Military men who despair, when it is their duty to hope even against all hope, ruin the cause which they are set to defend by sowing discouragement in the hearts of the soldiers. And so before Atra, the emperor, fearing that his army would no longer obey him,[1] abandoned a last attempt which seemed likely to be successful.

Severus holding a Victory in his hand, and crowned by Rome. (Reverse of a great Bronze.)

Was it at this time that Lætus perished?[2] At the battle of Lyons, Lætus, at the head of the cavalry, had not charged until after the report had come to him that the emperor was mortally wounded, and this charge had decided the victory. Severus being dead, and Albinus overthrown, Lætus would have taken their place;[3] but the emperor was not dead; and that which was perhaps an intended treason became the skilful manœuvre of a great captain. Severus believed this, or allowed it to be said. Dion asserts that being unable to strike at once the man who appeared to have saved him he bided his time, and in Mesopotamia caused Lætus to be slain in a camp tumult.[4] It is probable that there was neither treachery on the one side nor the instigation of a military riot on the other. Dion was very

[1] . . . . τὴν ἀπείθειαν τῶν στρατιωτῶν (Dion, lxxv. 12).

[2] This Lætus is to be distinguished from the defender of Nisibis, who was in that city at the time that the other Lætus was in Gaul.

[3] Dion, lxxv. 6. Spartian says (*Sev.*, 11) that the army, believing the emperor dead, were ready at once to make a new emperor.

[4] Dion, lxxv. 10. This author contradicts himself, representing Lætus, in the same sentence, as beloved by the army, and then tells us that Severus charged them with the murder, saying that they had committed it παρὰ γνώμην αὐτοῦ.

remote from the spot where this tragedy took place, and could only give currency to the rumours which were in circulation in Rome. Now two things in this narrative are absolutely contrary to the known character of this emperor: the long hesitation before striking the man whose death he had resolved on; and the dangerous method he is said to have employed, the instigation of a camp tumult, which no man can be sure of arresting at the desired point. Certain it is that Lætus was killed by the soldiers,

Septimius Severus and his Two Sons.[1]

and we know that disorders of this kind were then frequent in the army; he doubtless lost his life in endeavouring to allay one.

At Ctesiphon the emperor had abandoned all the spoils to the soldiery. To thank their chief by gratifying his paternal affection, the army saluted Bassianus with the title of Augustus and proclaimed Geta Cæsar. To the former Severus gave the tribunitian power (198). Caracalla, though only eleven years of age, was then associated in the Empire, honours which were premature and fatal to their object. In this elective empire the tendency towards

[1] *Cabinet de France*, cameo, No. 250, sardonyx of three layers, 25 millim. by 30. Two victories, each standing on a globe, are crowning Caracalla and Geta. The emperor is holding the hand of his second son over a lighted altar. Below it a half-effaced inscription: (ὑπὲρ τῆς) ΝΕΙΚΗΝ ΤΩΝ ΚΥΡΙΩΝ. . . . . For the victory of our lords. M. Chabouillet remarks (*op. laud.*, p. 437) that the title of *dominus* or κύριος, does not appear on Roman coins until after the time of Diocletian; Caligula, Domitian, and Trajan, had already taken it, or allowed it to be ascribed to them, and it is frequent in inscriptions, especially dating from Severus and his sons.

heredity was irresistible. The father always yielded to this natural sentiment, and his will was always accepted. And yet, with the one exception of Titus, the hereditary succession had given Rome only bad rulers, Caligula, Domitian, and Commodus. "The designated emperor" would soon add to this list a name which is one of the most odious in history.[1]

Notwithstanding his unsuccessful attempt upon Atra, Severus had struck really a heavy blow in the East. The fall of Ctesiphon had resounded even in the most distant provinces, and everywhere was extolled the great conqueror of the Parthians, *Parthicum Maximum*. The Empire had not been materially aggrandized, which would have been a useless thing; but a salutary terror had been inspired among those who had been accustomed to break over its frontiers, and these nations were reduced to quiet for the next eighteen years in consequence.

Pacator orbis.[2]

Fundator pacis.[3]

Severus therefore merits the title that he received of *propagator imperii*. Many others were given him,[4] such as *pacator orbis*, *fundator pacis*, etc., for the power attested by such constant good fortune had excited an enthusiasm at once servile and grateful. To this countless inscriptions, especially in the African and Hellenic provinces, bore witness. Athens, which had to obtain pardon for not having been able to foresee the success of the future emperor, signalized herself by the fervour of her zeal, and numberless cities offered the sacrifice of the bull.[5]

Through his wife, Julia Domna, Severus was half Syrian. Before his accession to the Empire he had commanded the Fourth Scythian Legion in Syria (182-184); after the death of Niger he

[1] Spartian in his memoir of Severus (20) calls the attention of Diocletian to the fact that it was very rarely that a great man left a son *optimum et utilem . . . . aut sine liberis viri interierunt, aut tales habuerunt plerique, ut melius fuerit de rebus humanis sine posteritate discedere.* Diocletian, however, had no sons, and this was a consolation that the imperial historiographer took occasion to offer him.

[2] Reverse of a gold coin of Severus. The legend surrounds the radiate head of the sun.

[3] Severus veiled, holding an olive-branch. Reverse of a gold coin.

[4] *C. I. L.*, ii. 1,669, 1,670, 1,969, etc. Cf. Cohen, iii. Nos. 118–122, 360–5, 610–12.

[5] Herzberg (*die Gesch. Griechenl. unter der Herrsch. der Röm.*), who collects the minutest details, has not been able (vol. ii. pp. 421 *et seq.*) to derive anything of importance from these inscriptions. See also Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.*, Nos. 2,159, 2,322, 2,374, 2,466, etc.

remained there more than two years, and after the death of Albinus four years more. He therefore well understood these countries and their needs. But for what purpose did he stay there so long, especially after the Parthian war was at an end? It certainly could not have been pleasure which detained him so long in the Oriental provinces. Gratifications of the senses could have had no hold upon such a man, who had an ambition for great

A Victory sacrificing the Bull of the Roman Triumphs. (Bas-relief in the Louvre.)

things and consequently a contempt for petty ones. His biographer says, speaking of one of the provinces, that Severus made many regulations there, of which the foolish writer does not give us one. We may be sure that he employed his leisure in strengthening discipline among the legions, in fortifying the outposts, in establishing order in the land, security upon the highways, and that he introduced Roman civilization into these provinces that he might the better count upon their fidelity. The few facts revealed by those unexceptionable witnesses, coins and

medals, permit us to conjecture those which official history hides from us.

First, between the Euphrates and the Tigris, he organized Mesopotamia as a province. He gave it for a permanent garrison two legions which he had created during the war, the First and Third Parthian,[1] and he increased the power of these military forces by multiplying in the new province the civil Roman element. Colonists were established at Nisibis, the central stronghold of the country, which received the emperor's name, Septimia; at Rhesæna, where the Third Parthian had its headquarters, between Nisibis and Thapsacus, at the great passage of the Euphrates; at Zaitha, the city of olive-trees,[2] situated on the same river below Circesium and at the entrance of the high road to Palmyra. The Syrian desert had become Quiritary land.

Coin of Rhesæna.[3]

On the north-west of the province the king of Osrhoene had given up to the emperor his children as hostages, and had furnished well-trained archers for the campaign against the Parthians;[4] on the north the king of Armenia had been supported in his fidelity to the Empire; on the south the garrison of Zaitha kept the Arab chiefs in obedience; and on the east the passage of the Tigris was secured by the occupation of Nineveh, where Trajan had established veterans, and where Severus must have left some

[1] The *II. Parthica* was brought back into Italy by Severus; it had its headquarters at Albano, where have been found its cemetery and countless inscriptions due to it. (Henzen, *Annali*, 1867, pp. 37 *et seq.*) It is useless to try to distinguish the measures adopted by Severus in his first and in his second residence in Mesopotamia.

[2] *Septimia col. Nisibis* (Dion. lxxv. 3; Eckhel, vii. 517). Eckhel, vii. 518. Amm. Marcell., xxiii. 5.

[3] Bronze of the Emperor Decius making mention of the *III. Parthica*: CEII(timia) PHCHINHCIΩN E III P, around a temple, beneath which a river or water-god is swimming, a personification of the Chaboras, the city being situated near the head waters of this affluent of the Euphrates.

[4] Later this king came to Rome, between the years 203 and 208, to renew his promises of fidelity. Severus received him there with great display (Dion. lxxix. 16). In respect to the Armenians, Saint Martin, in his *Mémoires sur l'Arménie* (vol. i. p. 301), speaks of an invasion of Khazars who, having traversed the gorges of Derbend in the Caucasus, and crossed the Kour, are said to have defeated the Armenians, and slain their king Vologeses or Wagharsh, in the year 198 A.D. These events explain easily enough why Severus had no need of protecting himself against them at the time of his descent upon Ctesiphon. Between the Parthians who threatened them from the south-east, and the barbarians who menaced them on the north, the Roman alliance was a necessity for the Armenians.

to defend this outpost of the Empire.[1] He had therefore firmly established his authority between the two rivers, protected by the Armenian mountains and defended by a whole system of fortresses and colonies; and for centuries to come this province remained the bulwark of the Empire.

After the death of Niger he had united Lycaonia and Isauria to Cilicia, in order to constitute in the neighbourhood of Syria a great province to protect that gate to the East;[2] for contrary reasons he divided the province of Syria, which had hitherto given hopes of too ambitious range to those placed in command over it: on the north, Commagene and Hollow Syria, that is to say, the valley through which the Orontes flows to Antioch and the sea, making itself a passage between the Amanus and Mount Lebanon; on the south and east, Phœnician Syria, including all the sea-shore, and on the eastern slope of Lebanon, into the very midst of the desert, Heliopolis, Emesa, Damascus, and Palmyra. The two roads which led into Mesopotamia crossing the Euphrates, the one at Thapsacus, the other at Circesium, were thus guarded by two armies,[3] and they were well guarded. The emperor intrusted the government of Cœle-Syria to one of his ablest lieutenants, Marius Maximus, whom Spartian calls "a very severe general," and there is reason to suppose that Phœnician Syria was given in charge to some other experienced captain. After the battle of Issus Severus had chastised Antioch with great harshness, for the reason that severity was natural to him; this city, however, remained the most important city in the Roman east, and he was too great a ruler to consult his personal rancour rather than the interest of the State, after he had satisfied justice, or what he regarded as justice. Antioch, like Byzantium, therefore, was first punished and after that favoured. On his return from Mesopotamia he stopped in the old Syrian metropolis, not for the purpose of enjoying the delights of Daphne, in the pleasure-haunted shades of the sanctuary of Apollo, but to efface the memory of his former severities. There he gave his eldest son the *toga virilis* (201), and a year later the consulship,

[1] Upon the coins of Trajan's reign Nineveh is called *Colonia Augusta*. Dion, a contemporary of Severus, says of Nineveh: ἡμιτέρα ἐστι καὶ ἄποικος ἡμῶν νομίζεται (xxxvi. 6).

[2] Lebas and Waddington, *Voyage archéol.*, No. 1,880. The inscription in No. 616 shows these two provinces united to Galatia.

[3] Under Alexander Severus there were five legions in Syria and in Palestine.

which he wished to share with Caracalla. This was treating Antioch as a capital. These solemnities and their accompanying

1.

2.

3.

Plaques of Gold of the Second or Third Century, found in Syria. No. 1, Dionysus; No. 2, Silenus; No. 3, a Box in which the Plaques were kept.[1]

festivities had their effect in bringing the frivolous city into friendly relations with the new dynasty, and Severus completed the reconciliation in causing magnificent baths to be built at Antioch.[2]

[1] *Cabinet de France. Cf. Gazette archéol.*, 1875, pl. 2; and p. 513, a dissertation by Baron de Witte.

[2] *Chronicles* of Eusebius and S. Jerome, *ad ann.* 202, and Malalas, p. 294, in the *Byzantine Chronicle*.

In Phœnician Syria great public works were undertaken. Four military milestones, which have been found on the road from Sour to Sayda, all bearing the same inscription, dated in the year 198, show the emperor's lieutenant putting in repair the roads in this province; the name of Severus engraved upon another mile-

Roman Bridge in Syria (at Abu-el-as-Waad; Syrian coast).[1]

stone in the neighbourhood of Laodicea proves that the same orders had been given in respect to Syria Prima.[2]

The Syrian region sloping down to the Mediterranean Sea had long been in possession of all the advantages that ancient civilization could bestow. Alexander and his successors had Hellenized these populations of Punic or Aramæan origin, and the colonies that Rome had established there, the garrisons maintained there by her, had introduced her language, which the soldiers were obliged

[1] From the *Album de voyage du duc de Luynes*, pl. 7.

[2] *C. I. L.*, iii. No. 203. Waddington, *Inscr. de Syrie*, 1838.

to employ.[1] Tyre, which had been burnt by Niger's Moors,[2] was repeopled by the veterans of the Third Gallic Legion, and obtained the *jus Italicum*. Berytus, where dwelt the descendants of the legionaries of Augustus, had long enjoyed this right, and the city contained the most important school of Roman law: Papinian, Ulpian, and all those jurisconsults whose "judaisms" have been noted in the *Pandects*, were students here. Berytus had at first declared against Severus. We do not know whether the city was punished for this, or whether Papinian appeased the emperor's anger. At any rate, she quickly changed her attitude: an inscription of the year 196 found in the neighbourhood contains the expression of the city's desire for the safety of Severus and Julia Domna, the mother of the camps.[3]

Julia Domna, the Wife of Severus.[4]

On the eastern slope of the Lebanon and beyond the Jordan Rome had had much to do. Before Trajan's time Batanæa (Hauran) and Trachonitis (Ledja) were the same that they are to-day, wildernesses traversed by savage nomads. Agrippa, the Jewish king, said to them: "You live like wild beasts in their

[1] Upon the statue of Memnon all *proskynemata* of soldiers or officials are in Latin; see Letronne, *Inscr. d'Égypte*, ii. 324.

[2] Herod., iii. 3.

[3] Waddington, *Inscr. de Syrie*, 1843. Under Caracalla, the Third Gallic Legion cut through rocks (the inscription says mountains) which obstructed the course of the Lycus. (*Ibid.*, 1845.)

[4] Statue of Luni marble. Museum of the Capitol. This statue has been preserved with the antique head.

lairs."[1] Trajan and Hadrian had introduced order and life into these regions, where had arisen great and splendid cities; and Severus carried on their work. Doubtless he also visited the province of Arabia, where a Roman legion had not long before revolted. The name of Septimiani, borne by the decurions of Batanæa, connects with his reign, by a tie which unfortunately we cannot trace, the municipal organization of this region. Ruins of cities are found here whose inhabitants had the language, the measures, calendar, and many usages belonging to Rome.[2] An imperial legate wrote to these Arabs, into whose country the modern traveller now penetrates only at the risk of his life, as he would have written to the magistrates of Spain or Gaul, to guarantee them against the abuse of military billet—a proof that on this remote frontier the Roman administration showed the same care as in the oldest provinces.[3] At Bostra, the capital of the province of Arabia, legends on medals in Trajan's time were Greek; a few years after Severus they were Latin.[4]

It is uncertain whether the forty-two block-houses, whose remains are counted between Damascus and Palmyra, were constructed by Severus or by Hadrian, or even at an earlier date.[5] We only know that Severus kept them well-supplied with men and provisions, for if we do not find traces of him in any certain

[1] *ἐμφωλίσαντες* (Waddington, *op. cit.*, 2,329). Cf. Josephus, *Ant. Jud.*, xiv. 15, 5, and vol. iii. p. 626 of this work.

[2] Cf. Henzen, *Bull. de l'Inst. archéol.*, 1867, pp. 204 *et seq.* Waddington, *Inscr. de Syrie*, 2,136 *et seq.*

[3] "If any soldier or traveller forcibly seeks lodging among you, write me to obtain reparation. You owe nothing to strangers, and since you have a caravanserai (*ξενῶνα*) to receive them, you cannot be compelled to take them into your own houses. Post this letter in some public place in your city where it may easily be read by all men, so that none can plead ignorance as an excuse." (Waddington, *Inscr. de Syrie*, 2, 424.) The author of this letter is a legate of Alexander Severus.

[4] Waddington, *ibid.*, 460.

[5] See vol. v. p. 81 of this work. According to Peutinger's map it was 212 miles from Damascus to Palmyra. Porter (*Handbook for Syria*) reckons it forty hours' walk from one city to the other. MM. de Vogüé and Waddington have also found relay-stations of Roman soldiers along a road leading from Bostra to Palmyra across a desolate region. Unfortunately the *graffiti* that they have read there give no dates. (*Inscr. de Syrie*, 522.) In the African Sahara the same precautions were taken; cf. vol. v. p. 198 of this work, and *Arch. des Missions*, 1877, pp. 362 *et seq.* When we find the desert everywhere bordered with Roman forts it is easy to understand that the provinces behind them must have enjoyed a prosperity which they lost when the misfortunes of the Empire caused that vigilant police to disappear. An inscription found at Palmyra in 1882 proves that as early as the time of Augustus that city was in some degree dependent upon the Romans. (*Bull. de Corr. hellén.*, 1882, p. 439.)

manner on the road leading to Palmyra, we do find them at Palmyra itself. This great mart of the desert, this Syrian outpost on the middle Euphrates, had furnished Severus with most useful succour in his expedition against Babylon. Like all commercial cities, Palmyra was cosmopolitan. Parthians and Armenians and Romans were there, also Greeks and a Jewish colony of importance, some of whose members rivalled the most considerable native Palmyrenes in wealth.[1] Accordingly, like Alexandria, the city had a *juridicus* to settle disputes which might arise between foreigners.[2] The family of the Odainath already held the first rank in Palmyra. One of them, Hairan, doubtless strategus of the city in the time of the Parthian war, so ably seconded Severus by his knowledge of localities and by the supplies that he was able to furnish

Palmyra. Royal Tomb.

[1] De Vogüé, *Inscr. sémit.*, 7, 16, 65 *et passim*.
[2] Δικαιοδότης. Cf. Waddington, *Inscr. de Syrie*, 2,606*a*.

to the legions, that the emperor permitted him to assume the name of Septimius, which from that time became the *gentilitium* of the great Palmyrene family. In the same way Herod the Great had been authorized by Augustus to unite himself to the family of the Cæsars by adding to his own names that of Julius. When sixty years later an Odainath, who had assumed the title of "king of kings," made himself the protector of the Roman Empire in the East, his prænomen Septimius recalled the time when his predecessors were but the clients of the emperor Severus.

The desert cities changed their conditions as the Arab sheiks changed their names: the Tadmor of Solomon's time was at this time a Roman colony, invested with the privileges of the *jus Italicum*; it had duumvirs (στρατηγοί), ædiles (ἀγορανόμοι),[1] and assemblies of senate and people. By its monuments it seems of Greek origin, by its institutions of Roman. It even had its distributions: frumentary tesseræ have been found there, and tickets available for corn and oil,[2] and among its citizens were Roman knights and senators. Severus had already, it is probable, assigned to it for a garrison that body of cavalry which we find there at a later period.[3]

Then, as now, the wandering Arabs were obliged during the summer to lead their flocks to the springs of Palmyra or to the pastures of Djebel-Hauran.[4] By strongly occupying these points the Romans made themselves masters of the desert, and preserved order in it better than has ever been done since.

At the eastern extremity of the Hauran, in the midst of what seems an accursed region, rises a volcanic hill at whose base is a Roman camp with walls over six feet in thickness, flanked with towers and protected by a moat: a resolute band within this fort could bid defiance to all the Arabs of the desert. On the summit of the hill an outpost kept watch over this vast plain, where are seen ruins of baths and of houses. "Before us," says

[1] In other Greek and Syrian cities the ædiles bore the name of bishops, ἐπίσκοποι, or supervisors.

[2] De Vogüé, *Inscr. sémit.*, 16, 146-7, and Waddington, *Inscr. de Syrie*, 2,606*a*, 2,607, and 2,629.

[3] Waddington, *ibid.*, 2,580.

[4] The chiefs of these nomads were called ethnarchs, strategi, or οἱ ἀπὸ ἐθνους νομάδων. Cf. Waddington, *op. cit.*, p. 511. Certain of these tribes retain the same names they bore eighteen centuries ago. (*Ibid.*, p. 525, No. 2,287.)

M. de Vogüé, "no European had ever disturbed this solitude."[1] But the Romans had been there, and they had brought civilization and security.

Thus a regular form of life was making its introduction into these desolate solitudes. Sheltered by fortified posts which bordered "the land of thirst," cities came into existence in the valleys to which canals brought down the mountain streams;[2] a municipal rule was developed there, and inscriptions speak to us of strategi and decuriones in places where was lately heard only the jackal's howl. Often from the summit of a mass of ruins the traveller sees in the distance great blocks of basalt placed regularly and framed with a double row of larger blocks which rise above the surface. It is a Roman road which, after the passage of fifteen centuries, makes known that a great nation has been there.[3]

Coin of Septimius Severus struck at Petra.[4]

At countless points upon this Biblical soil we find the Roman imprint. In extreme antiquity the plateau of Baalbec bore a sanctuary of Baal, the great god of the Semitic tribes; but the magnificent ruins now to be seen on that spot date from the times of the Antonines and Severus.[5] We must therefore invert the words of Juvenal: it is not now that the Orontes flows into the Tiber; in the second century and at the beginning of the third of the Christian era, the Tiber flows in the desert, bearing the spirit of the Empire and its arts even to the remote city of Petra.

Severus had followed the track of Trajan as far as Ctesiphon; he also followed Hadrian's track in Palestine and Egypt.

[1] *La Syrie centrale*, by M. de Vogüé.

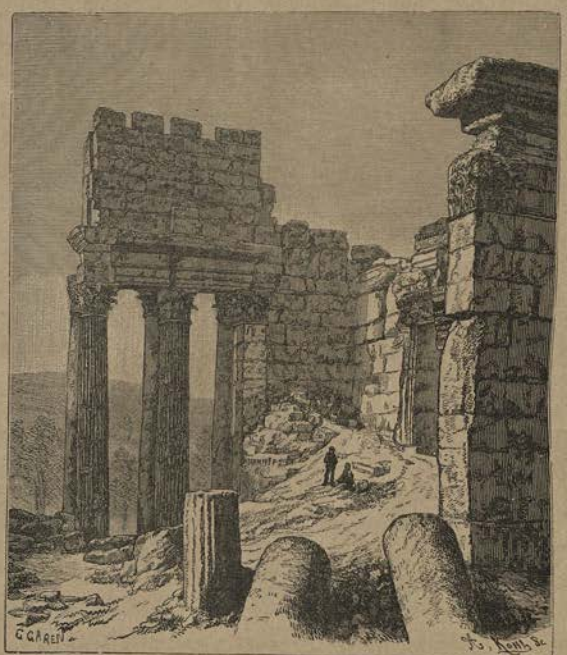
[2] Waddington, *Inscr. de Syrie*, 2,296 and 2,301, ἐκ προνοίας of Corn. Palma. The first care of Cornelius Palma, the conqueror of Arabia, had been to furnish a supply of water to the new subjects of the Empire. In pursuing this excellent policy in Algeria the French have but followed a Roman example.

[3] "The Roman road from Bostra to Damascus still exists, almost in its original condition," says M. Waddington, "and the remains of many others are found here and there in these regions." The Septimian coins are very abundant in all these provinces, and to this epoch belong the ruins of Heliopolis, the temple of Jupiter having been built by Septimius Severus and the temple of the Sun by Hadrian and Antoninus. The latter building was destroyed by Theodosius. (*Revue archéol.*, April, 1877.)

[4] ΑΔΡΙΑΝΗ ΠΕΤΡΑ. The personified city seated upon a rock. Reverse of a bronze coin.

[5] See vol. v. of this work, pp. 79–81, 140, and the *Syria of the Present Day*, by Dr. Lortet.

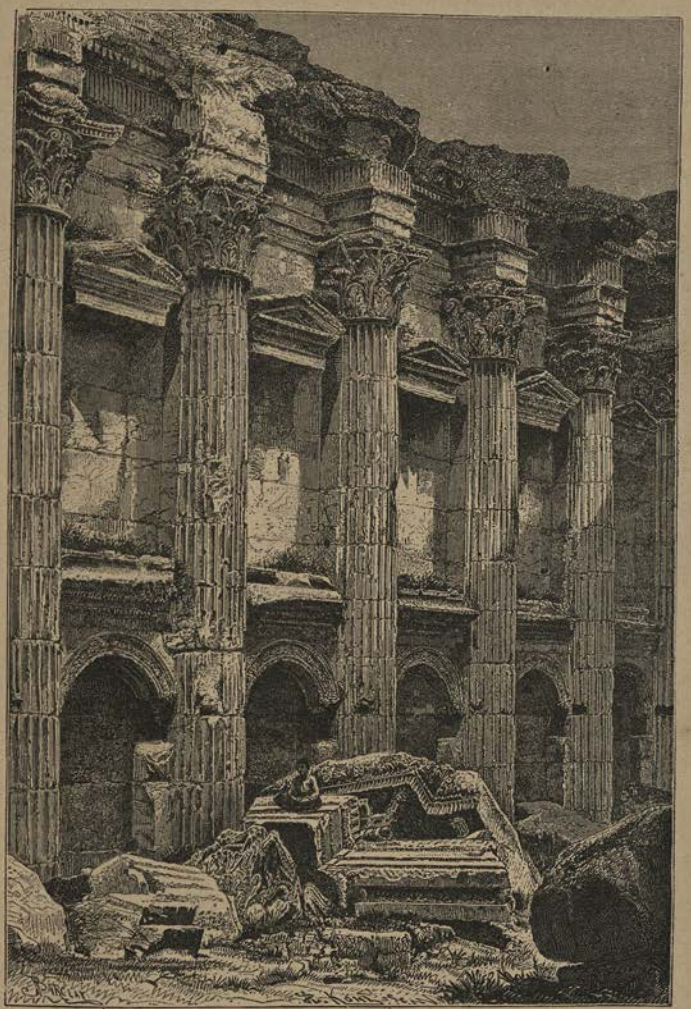
Palestine, as usual, was a prey to disorders. Dion speaks of a certain robber-chief who devastated Judæa and was able to baffle all his pursuers. One day he had the audacity to enter the emperor's camp, and to converse with Severus as though he had been a tribune of the Roman army. No one suspected the rash



Ruins of Heliopolis (Baalbec). Temple of Jupiter.

act, and the chief, who probably only wished to maintain his independence, returned in safety to his mountains. This fact, the story of Bullas, one of the curious legends of Italian outlawry,[1] the history of Maternus, who, under Commodus, pillaged the entire country of Gaul, and of Numerianus, the false senator, of whose exploits we have recently made mention, show what rapid progress

[1] See vol. v. p. 490.



Interior of the Small Temple at Baalbec.

disorganization was making in this great body, the Empire, as soon as Commodi and Juliani succeeded the Trajans and Hadrians. To maintain order in so many countries and amid populations so diverse, it was plainly needful that factious persons, senatorial mischief-makers, ambitious chiefs, or highway-robbers, should feel that there rested upon them the hand of an energetic ruler, a man whose conscience would not be disturbed by any severity however extreme. One of the Odainath of whom we have just now spoken was planning a revolt and had intrigued with the Persians. Rufinus, the Roman general in command, put him to death, and, being summoned before the emperor on complaint of the son of the murdered man, made reply: "Would to the gods that the emperor would authorize me to rid him of the son also!"[1] This justice was summary; but it had the effect of preventing a Persian invasion. Is it safe to say that we ourselves in Algeria or the English in India have never acted in a similar manner? The Roman emperors not infrequently found themselves in the presence of these formidable perils, when what was believed to be the safety of the State appeared the supreme law.

Severus was one of those men who are ready to sacrifice everything to the public tranquillity.[2] Unfortunately, he included the Christians among the disturbers of the provinces. The Jews and Samaritans had just recommenced in Palestine with weapons in their hands their ancient quarrel. Whether the Christians were involved in it is not now clear. But this rumour of disturbances on account of religious opinions irritated the emperor. The legions struck a few blows, and tranquillity was restored by some executions. Later, the senate saw fit to give these measures taken in the interest of public order the importance of a victory. When the emperor declined to make a triumphal entry into Rome in honour of the taking of Ctesiphon, the senators, to pay his son a compliment and to give Rome a holiday, decreed to Caracalla a Jewish triumph. In order to prevent the recurrence of these disorders, "Severus," says his biographer, "made many regulations during his stay in Palestine." Of these we know but one, renewed

[1] De Vogüé, *la Syrie centrale*, p. 30. This took place in the reign of Severus, between 241 and 251.

[2] *Fuit delendarum factionum cupidus* (Aur. Victor, *de Cæs.*, 20).

from the old imperial decree which forbade the rabbis to practise circumcision upon men of other races than their own,[1] and forbade the Christians to make proselytes. The same measure was applied to both religions, not with the design of destroying them, but in order to prevent them from extending themselves. Elsewhere we shall see that the results of this edict differed extremely in the two cases.

It was not the intention of Severus that these Jews, shut up by his edict within their religion and their race, should be like pariahs amid their fellow-citizens; he permitted them to aspire to municipal honours, dispensing them from obligations which were inconsistent with their religion.[2] But national sentiment was stronger than the law; the Jews remained isolated until the time when Constantine, anxious to recruit the exhausted senatorial class, ordered that all who had the requisite landed property should be included in it.[3] This however brought in but few recruits, for the Jews, considering themselves as strangers and sojourners in any land save Palestine, bought neither land nor houses; they already had their preference for property that they could carry with them wherever they went.

From Palestine Severus went into Egypt, a fruitful land where the race was as prolific as vegetation,[4] numbering at this time over 8,000,000, with few slaves, for agricultural labour was carried on then, as now, by fellahs of free condition, and the industrial labour by a multitude of Greeks and Jews. Life was not painful in Egypt, except in the quarries, which were worked only by convicts, and to this industry the emperor caused great activity to be imparted.[5] At Mount Casius, Severus, like Hadrian, offered a funeral sacrifice at Pompey's tomb, and thence went up the Nile

[1] See vol. iv. p. 723. An edict of persecution against the Jews never was issued: *Judæorum sectam nulla lege prohibitam satis constat* (Constitution of Theodosius, *anno* 393. *Cod. Theod.*, xvi. 8 and 9).

[2] *Honores adipisci permisit, sed et necessitates eis imposuit quæ superstitionem eorum non læderent* (*Digest*, l. 2, 3, § 3).

[3] *Cod. Theod.*, xvi. 8, 3.

[4] Josephus (*Bell. Jud.*, ii. 16, 4) reckons the population at 8,700,000, a number which, a hundred years later, was even larger. Cf. Letronne, *Journ. des Savants*, 1844, p. 434.

[5] An inscription of Septimius Severus in Egypt consecrated the discovery near Philæ of new granite quarries, whence were obtained "large and numerous columns." Cf. Letronne, *Journ. des Savants*, 1836, p. 684; *C. I. L.*, iii. 75. The quarries of Djebel Fatereh continued to be worked up to the time of Diocletian.

by the Pelusiac mouth.[1] He visited with interest the pyramids of Ghizeh, finer, or at least more regular at that time, because they had still their facing of stone; the great Sphinx at their feet, a mysterious monument already damaged by the many centuries which had then passed over it, and repaired by Severus; the Serapeum of Memphis, which led to the tombs of Apis, which a Frenchman, Mariette, has rediscovered; the Labyrinth, the marvels of Thebes

The Egyptian Sphinx.

and of Philæ, and the rest. He had explained to him the hieroglyphics which it was still the custom to put on the walls of the temples;[2] and his name has been read by Champollion at the side of sculptures which the emperor ordered for the pronaos of the great temple of Esne.[3] Memnon still spoke, but it was for the last time. In an excess of pious zeal, Severus restored as we now see it this colossus, broken in the time of Augustus; but from the day when the statue no longer offered to the rising sun its wide

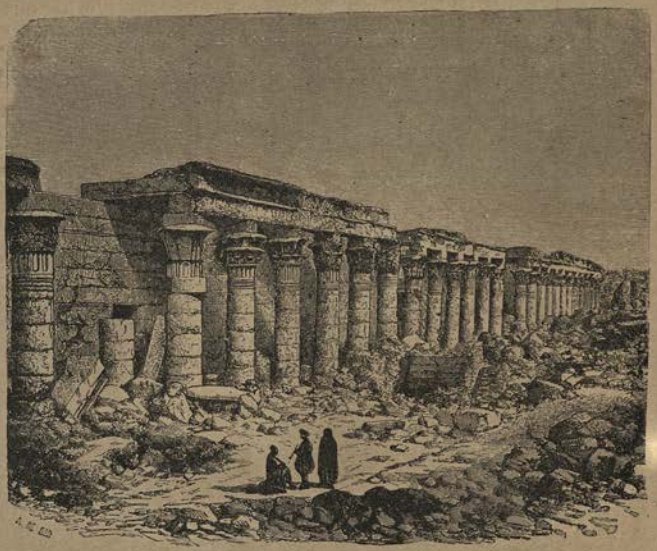
[1] Letronne, *Inscr. d'Égypte*, vol. ii. pp. 487–518.

[2] The last known hieroglyphic inscription is an offering of the Emperor Decius about the year 250; but Letronne is of opinion that the use of this writing continued as late as the sixth century. (*Journ. des Savants*, 1843, p. 464.) Inscriptions exist in which the Greeks call themselves engravers of hieroglyphics. (Letronne, *Inscr. d'Égypte*, vol. ii. p. 475.)

[3] *Lettres écrites d'Égypte*, p. 86.

cleft of unequal surface, impregnated with the dews of night, the god ceased to utter "his divine voice."[1]

"Curious in respect to all things human and divine, even the most secret," Severus informed himself as to the sources of the



The Temple of Isis at Philæ.

Nile, to which the Romans approached very near.[2] Dion Cassius speaks of them in mentioning this journey of the emperor, of which he probably heard the story, and, if he is deceived in placing the sources of the river at the extremity of the Mauretanian Atlas, he says nearly the truth when he speaks of it as

[1] See vol. v. p. 97, and the famous paper by Letronne upon the statue of the Pharaoh Amen'otep, who lived about the year 1680 B.C. No one of the inscriptions engraved upon this colossus is later than the time of Severus.

[2] Mariette's last discoveries at Karnak prove that the Pharaohs had bequeathed to their successors a much more complete knowledge of the valley of the Upper Nile than was believed. The armies of Thothmes III. certainly penetrated as far as Cape Ras-Hafun, south of Cape Guardafui, probably even in the interior going beyond Khartoum, and Ptolemy speaks of three great equatorial lakes. However, Amm. Marcellinus (xxii. 15) declares the sources of the Nile to be undiscoverable: . . . . *posteræ ignorabunt ætates*. Nubian inscriptions state that the Blemmyes and the Axumites were conquered by Severus.

emerging from vast marshes which lie at the base of a high mountain covered with snow.[1] Severus had the intention of penetrating into the upper valley of the Nile, but a pestilence breaking out he relinquished the design and returned down the river to Alexandria. Here he visited the tomb of Alexander, the Museum, always busy

Pylons of the Temple of Isis at Philæ.[2]

with its useless labours,[3] and the library of the Serapeum, one of whose courts was adorned with the famous Pompey's Pillar. The emperor was pleased with this city, or thought it politic to appear so. The Alexandrians had taken sides with Pescennius, and inscribed upon their gates: "This city belongs to Niger, our master." When Severus appeared they said to him: "We did indeed write this, but were well aware that thou wert Niger's

[1] Dion, lxxv. 13.

[2] See vol. v. p. 87, the restoration of this temple.

[3] See vol. v. p. 89. In respect to the *nugæ difficiles* of the Museum, cf. Letronne, *Inscr. d'Égypte*, vol. ii. pp. 399–400, the inscription of that pensioner of the Museum who calls himself an Homeric poet because he composed *centos* of Homer's verses.

master."[1] The emperor asked no better excuse to pardon them. He restored to them the senate and municipal magistrates of which Augustus had deprived them, revised their laws,[2] restricted to voluntary jurisdiction the functions of the Roman *juridicus*, who

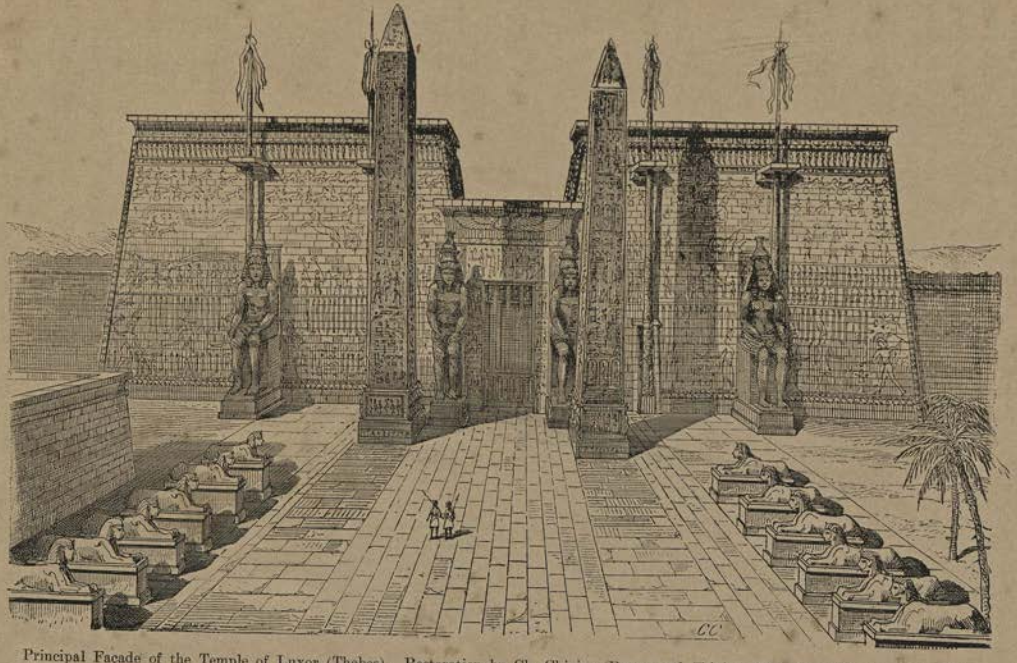
The Pharaoh Amen'otep III. (Memnon). (Basalt Statue in the British Museum.)

had been for over two centuries the supreme judge in Alexandria, and to mark his confidence in this province he cancelled the rule established by the first emperor, that Egypt should have for governor only a prefect of the equestrian order;[3] and finally he

[1] Spart., *Sev.*, 17.

[2] Dion, li. 17. Also Malalas says (xii. p. 293): *Ἰνδουλγεντίας αὐτοῖς παρασχὼν ἰδίξατο αὐτούς.*

[3] *Chronic. Alex., ad ann.* 202.



Principal Façade of the Temple of Luxor (Thebes). Restoration by Ch. Chipiez (Perrot and Chipiez, *Hist. of Arch.*, vol. i. p. 349).

gave the city a gymnasium and a great temple, which he called, like the temple built by Agrippa at Rome, the Pantheon.[1] Severus, like Trajan and Hadrian, was a great builder, and monumental Egypt was not likely to discourage his taste for magnificent constructions. The worship of Serapis, whose sanctuaries he had everywhere found,[2] particularly attracted him. He was impressed with that powerful synthesis of different doctrines by which the heathen essayed to satisfy the ideas then dominant of divine unity and of salvation by the god "master of light and of darkness, of life and death." Macrobius has preserved this reply of an oracle of Serapis: "Who am I? I will tell you what I am: the vault of heaven is my head; the sea, my breast; the region of the sky, my ears; and my eye, the brilliant torch of the sun, which sees all things."[3] Serapis represented therefore the god in whom all others were united; combined with Isis, "the goddess of a thousand names," he was the fecundating force and the nature which conceives; also he was the god who gave safety in heaven and earth. His temples were thronged with pilgrims; the walls of them were hidden with offerings, and all men talked of the miraculous cures that he wrought, while the old divinities remained silent and gloomy at their deserted altars. Severus and those who accompanied him seem to have been won over to this cult.[4] Caracalla, at least, consecrated to Serapis many temples, even some in Rome, notably near the Colosseum, a sanctuary of Isis and Serapis which gave its name to that region of the city;[5] and when Severus built a Pantheon at Alexandria we are led to believe that he was

Serapis, on a Bronze of Septimius Severus coined at Ptolemais.

[1] An inscription (Letronne, *ibid.*, p. 463) shows him also repairing the pavement of a temple. If so many epigraphic monuments had not perished we should certainly have had more numerous proofs of the works ordered by Severus in Egypt.

[2] The rhetorician Aristides enumerates forty-three in Egypt. To this author Serapis is the god of the gods, who rules the land and sea, light and darkness, life and death.

[3] *Saturn.*, I. xx. 17.

[4] *Jucundam sibi peregrinationem hanc propter religionem dei Serapidis . . . . Severus ipse postea semper ostendit* (Spart., *Sev.*, 17).

[5] The third. The worship of Isis had been surreptitiously introduced into Rome as early as the time of the Second Punic War (Val. Max., I. ii. 3), and two centuries before the Christian era Delphi already had a Serapeion, which the French School of Athens has recently discovered. (*Bull. de corr. Hellén.*, 1882, p. 306.) In respect to this cult, see vol. v. p. 705 of this work. Commodus was a fervent worshipper of Isis. (Lamp., *Comm.*, 9.)

influenced by an idea of religious syncretism, in giving the name of all the gods to a temple which in his mind he dedicated to the One Divine Principle. Thus took shape this new form of paganism which we have seen coming into existence in the preceding century, which prepared the way for the Jehovah of the Mosaic religion.[1]

Notwithstanding his interest in religions, Severus was no more favourable to theological quarrels in Egypt than he had been in Palestine. He removed from all the sanctuaries the books containing secret doctrines, those which kept alive organizations that existed in secrecy and were prolific in seditious schemes. These books he did not destroy, but he shut them up in the tomb of Alexander, so that no person should read them. He was a true Roman, one of those statesmen and soldiers who had no affection for matters which the sword can never settle and by which governments are for ever disturbed. But he was also a man of fine intelligence. Among these books there is one which, instead of proscribing, he certainly admired, the *Book of the Dead*, which we find with the mummies, as it were a voice from beyond the tomb. Here are words like these: "When that divine principle, intelligence, enters a human soul, it seeks to rescue it from the tyranny of the body and raise it to its own elevation. . . . . Often it triumphs; then the conquered passions become virtues, the soul, set free from its bonds, aspires to good, and divines the eternal splendours through the veil of matter which obscures its vision.

"When a man dies his soul appears before Osiris, and his actions are weighed in the infallible balance. If it is pronounced guilty, it is given over to the tempests and storms of the combined elements, until it can return into a body, which in its turn it tortures and overwhelms with evils and drives into crime and madness." That is to say, the wicked man is a condemned soul expiating the sins of a former existence.

But heaven opens to the soul which can say to its judge: "I

[1] See vol. v. pp. 690 *et seq.* Severus had already erected in Byzantium a temple and a statue to the Sun, *Deo Zeuxippo*. Malalas, *Chronogr.*, xii. p. 291. Tertullian (*Apol.*, 24) says himself to the Romans: *Nonne conceditis de estimatione communi aliquem esse sublimiorem et potentiorem velut principem mundi . . . . imperium summæ dominationis esse penes unum.* We shall see in the time of Aurelian, Constantine, and Julian, the increasing popularity of the worship of the Sun.

have followed what is right and spoken the truth; no man can complain of me; I have cherished my parents; I have been the joy of my brothers and the delight of my servants.' I have committed no crime or abominable act. No labourer has exceeded his day's work for me. I have done the slave no ill turn with his master, nor driven the flock away from its pasturage; I have committed no adultery. I am pure! I am pure!"

And again: "I have neither lied nor done evil, and I have sowed joy, giving bread to the hungry, and water to the thirsty, and garments to the naked."

"Then this pure soul rises through the unknown heavens. Its knowledge increases, its strength is augmented, it passes through the heavenly dwelling and tills the mystic fields of Aalu. At last the day of the blessed eternity dawns for it; it is united with the flock of the gods in adoration of the Perfect One; it sees God face to face, and is lost in Him."[1]

That which ancient Egypt had so long kept for herself alone was now spreading through the world. This country, of which Bossuet, judging by external appearances, said that all was god there save God himself, was teaching divine unity, the judgment of the dead, and eternal blessedness gained by merit in our earthly life. From Memphis, from Jerusalem, from Palmyra, from even remoter lands, a current of ideas was setting which had a general similarity, and, meeting another current from Athens and Rome, was destined to blend with it. Upon these united streams was to sail, first discreetly and silently, but presently under full sail, S. Peter's bark bearing the triumphant cross.

[1] M. Maspero, *Revue critique*, 1872, p. 338.

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

GOVERNMENT OF SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS (193-211 A.D.).

I.—The Court; Plautianus and Julia Domna.

THE East being pacified and organized, Severus returned to Italy through Asia Minor and Thrace. Like Hadrian, he was in no haste to return to the *fêtes* and intrigues of the capital. It seemed to him more useful to inspect the frontier of the Danube which he had not visited for nine years, and to visit the armies of Mœsia and Pannonia to which he owed his throne. "Everywhere," says Herodian, "he introduced order throughout the provinces."[1] We admit the assertion as well-founded; unhappily, however, we have not the facts to prove it.

Souvenir of the Return of Septimius Severus to Rome (*Adventus augg.*).[3]

In the middle of the year 202[2] Severus at last came back to Rome. It was the tenth year of his reign. At this point it had been the custom to renew the imperial powers, *sacra decennalia;* but this fiction had been long since given up. The solemnity was but an anniversary celebrated with great magnificence. Severus on this occasion added a largess of 50,000,000 drachmæ, which was distributed at the rate of 1,000 sesterces apiece[4] among the prætorians and all those who received public corn. The ruler had his share: an arch of triumph, which is still in existence, was erected in his honour at the foot of the Capitol. Its proportions are fine, but the extreme amount of carving, which seems the work of artisans rather than of artists, betrays the decline of decorative

[1] Herod., iii. 10.

[2] There exists in the *Code* (ii. 53, 1) an edict dated at Sirmium the 18th of March, 202, and in Cohen (iii. 234) a coin . . . . ADVENT. AUG., struck in the third consulship of Severus. An inscription of Lambesa (L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.*, 69) gives ground for the supposition that in 203 Severus went to Africa.

[3] The emperor and his two sons on horseback, lifting the right hand. (Gold coin.)

[4] Dion, lxxvi. 1: this largess implies 200,000 persons to receive it. See vol. v. p. 524.

art. A long inscription states that the arch was constructed in honour of the emperor "who has strengthened the State and enlarged the Empire."[1]

Two years later were celebrated the Secular games, which

Arch of Septimius Severus at Rome.

brought new gifts[2] to the people and the soldiers. Heralds went through the city and throughout Italy proclaiming: "Come to these games, which you will never see again." The last ones had been given by Domitian in the year 88. Three generations were allowed to pass between one celebration of these games and the

[1] . . . *ob rem publicam restitutam imperiumque populi Romani propagatum* (Orelli, No. 912).

[2] Josephus, ii. 7; Herod., iii. 8; Cohen, iii. pp. 254 and 273.

next. That in the time of Severus was the eighth which the Romans had observed.

At this time there was in Rome a man almost as powerful as the emperor himself, Plautianus, the prefect of the city. It will be remembered that Augustus had seemed to divide the authority into two parts, giving up one part to the senate and reserving the other for the emperor; and that he had constituted two kinds of offices, those belonging to the senatorial order and those belonging to the equestrian order. At the head of the former was the prefect of the city; at the head of the latter, the prætorian prefect. This division of authority was not a real one; the truth quickly appeared, and the emperor was politically what he must be in such a condition of society, the sole power.[2] He absorbed by degrees into his council,[3] which was composed of senators, jurisconsults, and the heads of the imperial judiciary, almost all the legislative, judicial, and administrative power of the senate. The latter retained scarcely any other function than that of registering the decrees determined on by the council.

Memorial of the Secular Games (*Sæcularia sacra*).[1]

The official who had especially the imperial confidence, since he held the emperor's life in his hands, was the man who gained most by this change. In the beginning the prætorian prefect had no other duty than that of protecting the emperor's person, who, to this end, had invested him with military jurisdiction over all the troops stationed in Italy.[4] The Greeks called him "the king's sword,"[5] and he followed close behind the emperor in all military expeditions. This "sword," however, the emperor employed for all kinds of uses. Was it necessary to arrest a guilty person, to kill an innocent one, or merely to make preliminary investigations, the prætorians were there. They and their chief owed the ruler

[1] Severus veiled, standing, sacrificing at an altar; opposite the emperor, Caracalla, standing; behind the altar, Concord; at the left, a flute player; at the right, a woman playing the lyre. (Gold coin.)

[2] I mean to say that, in the nature of the case, he inevitably became the political and military head, but he was not obliged to become the sole administrator.

[3] See vol. iii. p. 718, and vol. v. pp. 109 *et seq.*

[4] Except the urban cohorts, which were under the orders of the *præfectus urbi*. (Dion, lii. 24.)

[5] τὸ βασίλειον ξίφος (Phil., *Vita Apoll.*, vii. 16).

a military obedience in whatever he might command. The criminal jurisdiction of the prefect was extended at first from the soldiers to the slaves, and by degrees invaded all classes. He who originally was only the emperor's sword became "the sharer in his labours, his assistant,"[1] and in many cases his representative, *vice sacra agens*, as was the phrase later. He was a member of the council, and, in the emperor's absence, its presiding officer; he shared in the decision and execution of all affairs, assisted the emperor in determining matters, took his place with delegated power even in the civil jurisdiction, and received appeals in his stead. Alexander Severus afterwards gave the sanction of law to the prefect's decisions.[2] He was, therefore, with undetermined (and, therefore, unlimited) power a sort of prime minister, supreme judge, and in certain respects commander-in-chief of the army, for he filled the office of superintendent of military stores, inspector of arms and arsenals, and of adjutant-general in military operations.[3] The practice of composing the active army of detachments selected from the different legions, and placing at the head of these bodies of troops *duces* having no territorial command, had given occasion for this new duty of the prætorian prefects. They are the predecessors of those viziers of the sultan who hold in one hand the emperor's signet and in the other the standard of the Empire.

Such was the authority possessed by Perennis under Commodus, and now by Plautianus under Severus. As it was but a reflection of the imperial authority it is proper for us to distrust the accusations vaguely made against the prefects of the good reigns. Rulers mindful of the public welfare might have permitted great severities, but they would not have authorized crimes. This remark is particularly necessary in judging of Plautianus.

[1] *Socius laborum* (Tac., *Ann.*, iv. 2) and *adjutor imperii*. Pomponius, in the time of Hadrian, compared the prætorian prefect to the tribune of the *celeres* under the kings and the *magister equitum* under the dictators. (*Digest*, i. 2, 2, § 19.) Herodian (v. 1) quotes a letter of Macrinus to the senate, in which it is said that this office was very near the sovereign power, τῆς πράξεως οὐ πολύ τι ἐξουσίας καὶ δυνάμεως βασιλικῆς ἀποδεούσης, summed up by Lampridius (*Diad.*, 7) in the words, *secundus imperii*. See also what is said by Charisius in the *Digest* (i. 11) and by Dion (lxxv. 14).

[2] In 235. Cf. *Code*, i. 26, 2.

[3] *Hist. Aug., Gord.*, 28–29; *Trig. Tyr.*, 11. Later he had the duty of levying that part of the public tax which served for the pay and support of the army (Zosimus, ii. 32), and already punished financial agents guilty of extortion (Paulus, *Senten.*, v. 12, 6).

Of low birth, but like Severus an African, and possibly a member of the emperor's family,[1] he had followed the latter in all his wars at the head of the guards, and in the intervals between these expeditions he doubtless returned to Rome, where the emperor had need of a man upon whom he could rely. The authority of the

Plautilla, Wife of Caracalla. (Marble Bust in the Louvre.)

office therefore was increased by the absolute confidence which the emperor reposed in him who at this time held it.

On one occasion Plautianus, however, narrowly escaped a fatal disgrace. The order had been given to throw down the statues of the prefect which he had erected to himself near those

[1] His name was Caius Fulvius Plautianus. As the mother of Severus was Fulvia Pia, and his grandfather, Fulvius Pius, Reimar (*ad* Dion, lxxv. 14) concludes from this that Plautianus belonged to the imperial family. In certain inscriptions it is said, *adfinis*, D.D. N.N. (*C. I. L.*, iii. 6,075; v. 2,821); in others, *Augg. necessarius et comes per omnes expeditiones eorum* (*C. I. L.*, v. 1,074). Another inscription, No. 226, includes him in "the Divine House," and his name follows that of the Augusti, the Cæsar Geta, and the Empress Julia.

of the imperial family, and Severus had used the formidable expression, "public enemy," which had been caught up and repeated. But Plautianus had regained the emperor's favour, and the ruler, so severe towards others, seemed to make it his duty to dissipate the memory of his momentary displeasure by loading the prefect with public expressions of regard. An orator having said in the senate: "Before Severus does any harm to Plautianus the sky will fall," the emperor remarked to the senators at his side that this was true. "I could not injure Plautianus," he said, "and I hope not to survive him."[1] The emperor had violated, in favour of his prefect, a rule established by Augustus, twice appointing Plautianus consul,[2] and with the design of securing his son an experienced guide, had made his prefect the father-in-law of the designate emperor. Dion relates that he saw the dowry of Plautilla, "the new Juno,"[3] carried into the palace, and that it was enough for fifty kings' daughters.

Juno. (Statue in the Museum of Naples.)

[1] Dion, lxxv. 15 and 16.

[2] Plautianus had really had only the consular ornaments, but Severus counted this honour as if it had been a real consulship. (Dion, lxxv. 15; *C. I. L.*, vi. 220.) The rule of Augustus had already been violated: Clemens, under Domitian (Tac., *Hist.*, iv. 68), and Tatianus, under Hadrian (Spart., *Hadr.*, 8), had been at the same time consuls and prætorian prefects. Alexander Severus decided, contrary to the ordinance of Augustus, that the prætorian prefecture should be a senatorial office.

[3] Νία Ἥρα (Waddington, *Fastes de la prov. d'Asie* (p. 247).

Accordingly, the prefect had a royal retinue, and all ranks of men, the senate, the people, and the army, vied with each other in basely flattering him. Though it was no longer permitted to erect statues to him of equal height with those of the emperor himself, men called him the cousin of the emperor, they made oath by his fortune, and they prayed for him in the temples with all the more fervour because he seemed in no need of their prayers. Did Plautianus abuse this vast power, more dangerous in the hands of the minister than of the master? Dion accuses him of many follies and of every crime, without giving details, or else giving them too exactly. For example, the historian declares that Plautianus had stolen "the horses of the Sun, animals resembling tigers, that were kept on an island in the Red Sea." If we must explain this, it might be said that tiger-horses were zebras. But when he relates that Plautianus snatched from their homes a hundred Romans of free condition, married men and fathers of families, and submitted them to mutilation that his daughter might have a train of attendants in Oriental style, and adds, "the thing was not known until after his death," we are justified in saying that Dion allowed himself to repeat one of those foolish calumnies that gather about great men in their fall. Such an act could not have been accomplished in silence, and the prefect could never with impunity have outraged by this crime an imperial decree[1] in force at the time, or the public indignation which would have been aroused by the complaints of the wives and children of the victims.

His great wealth caused him to be suspected of great rapine, but Severus, who had seized the heritage of the Antonines, of Niger, and of Albinus, gave a large share to Plautianus in the numerous confiscations of the reign.[2] This African was no more reluctant to shed blood than was his master. After the victory at Lyons he insisted on the destruction of the family of Niger,

[1] Dion, lxvii. 2. See vol. iv. p. 696. Amm. Marcellinus points out that this law was still in force in the fourth century, and he esteems it very useful, *receptissima inclaruit lege*. (*Dom.*, xviii. 4.)

[2] Herod., iii. 10. Plautianus did not have, as has been asserted, "procurators of the private domain," like those of the emperor, scattered through the provinces to administer his estates. The *procurator ad bona Plautiani*, whom we find mentioned in the inscriptions (Or.-Henzen, No. 6,920), is a *procurator ad bona damnatorum* (*ibid.*, Nos. 3,190, 6,519).

whom Severus had at first spared. Since the death of Albinus the aristocracy did indeed still murmur and curse the new power in low tones; but it had not the energy to form conspiracies; Plautianus feigned or believed that such there were, and victims fell. It is not easy to see in Severus a weak ruler closing his eyes to crimes committed by his minister. If the prefect ordered unmerited punishments, the responsibility falls back upon the emperor, who, made suspicious by the senate's conduct towards the British Cæsar, approved of everything.

I have already indicated the secret of this favour, it was natural. Severus, whose feeble health warned him to take thought for the morrow, sought to secure to his son and to the Empire the assistance of a man capable of carrying on the work he had himself begun, and he believed that he had raised this man so high that he could have no temptation to seek to rise higher. It was a reasonable plan, but passion defeated it.

Gold Coin of Plautilla Augusta. On the obverse the head of the Augusta; on the reverse, Concord.

The excessive prosperity of "the vice-emperor"[1] dazzled him. Plautianus was guilty of the imprudence of estranging the empress by perfidious insinuations against her conduct, and offending the heir to the throne by the affectation of a paternal affection whose ill-judged advice exasperated this violent youth. The marriage of Plautilla, which seemed to consolidate his fortunes, caused their downfall. It is possible that Julia was averse to this union, and shared her son's feeling against this favourite whose popularity cast into the shade this emperor of fourteen, who, animated with equal hatred against father and daughter, expelled the latter from his bed and the former from his house. Dion does not inform us on this point; but he says that the young Augusta, prouder of her father than of her husband, had rendered herself intolerable to Caracalla, and that Plautianus, extremely exasperated against the empress, tormented her in a thousand ways. These domestic quarrels brought about a catastrophe.

Severus had renewed and strengthened the laws against

[1] Ὃς [Σεουῆρος] οὕτως αὐτῷ ὑπεῖκεν ἐς πάντα ὥστ' ἐκεῖνον μὲν ἐν αὐτοκράτορος αὐτὸν δὲ ἐν ἐπάρχου μοίρᾳ εἶναι (Dion lxxv. 15).

adultery, and prosecutions of this crime were innumerable in Rome.[1] Plautianus attempted to involve Julia in accusations of this nature, and Dion asserts, which appears strange, that he sought testimony against her even by subjecting women of rank to torture. Incap-

The Empress Julia Domna.[2]

able of struggling against the all-powerful minister, the empress took refuge among her men of letters and philosophers; but Caracalla did not accept the vexations of his mother with equal serenity, and his hatred of Plautianus redoubled.

Severus, alone of all the imperial household, supported the

[1] Dion, lxxvi. 16. Cf. in the *Digest* (xlviii. 5, 2, § 3) two edicts of Severus on this subject.

[2] Statue of Pentelic marble found at Bengazzi (Berenice), on the coast of northern Africa. Severus was a native of this region. (Louvre.)

prætorian prefect. Geta, a brother of the emperor, and colleague with Plautianus in the consulship of the year 203, was convinced that the latter meditated the destruction of all the imperial family, and upon his death-bed conjured his brother to save himself. The words of Geta made an impression; this was apparent from the funeral honours decreed to the accuser of Plautianus, and Caracalla believed the moment propitious to destroy the minister. Three centurions suborned by the young emperor came one evening to the palace to declare that Plautianus had employed them to assassinate Severus and his son; and in proof of this produced a written order to that effect, which they asserted they had received from the prefect. Severus, amazed but not convinced, sent for Plautianus. At the door of the palace he was deprived of his guards and entered the imperial presence alone. Severus spoke to him gently: "Why do you wish to destroy us," he said; "who is it that has persuaded you to this?" Plautianus denying the charge eagerly, Caracalla fell upon him, tore away his sword, and struck him in the face, crying out: "Yes, you have sought to murder me." He would have slain the prefect on the spot, but his father prevented it; upon this the youth called upon a lictor to kill Plautianus, and, being Augustus, his word was law; the lictor obeyed. The body of Plautianus, flung out from the palace, was cast into a lane, where it lay until Severus ordered it to be interred (23rd January, 204).[1]

In all this matter the emperor plays a wretched part. Through paternal affection he had suffered his friend to be murdered in his presence. On the morrow it was made clear to every one that the emperor did not believe in the pretended

[1] The *Chronicon paschale* places the death of Plautianus on the 22nd of January, 203. But, after having spoken of the prosecution of Racius Constans, which took place after the return of Severus to Rome, that is to say, in the year 202, Dion (lxxv. 16) says that Plautianus remained in favour for a year longer, which brings us to the middle of 203. An Algerian inscription (L. Renier), 70) shows that he was alive August 22nd, 203. To conclude, it appears from Dion (lxxvi. 3) that the catastrophe took place at the moment when the last spectators of the Palatine games were leaving the palace. These games, we know, began January 21st, and lasted three days (Marquardt, *Handb.*, iv. 429-445). This gives us the 23rd of January, 204, as the date of the tragedy. The story of Herodian (iii. 11 and 12), which supposes a real plot formed by Plautianus, is much more dramatic, but improbable. It tells the story as put in circulation by Caracalla, and inscriptions testify to its currency in the provinces. But Dion was at Rome; he heard everything; he was no friend to the prefect, and would not have failed to narrate the treason of Plautianus had he believed in it.

conspiracy,[1] for, instead of dwelling on the prefect's crime, in his address to the senate, he had recourse to the usual commonplaces of philosophy, deplored human weakness, which could not support too great elevation, and accused himself of having ruined Plautianus by loading him with honours and tokens of affection. It being necessary, however, for the justification of the murder that it should appear that a plot had been discovered, certain of the prefect's most devoted friends were sent to join him in the other world.[2] His daughter and his son were banished to Lipari, where, at a later period, Caracalla caused them to be slain.

Laurelled Caracalla.[3]

It is not certain whether it was as a friend of Plautianus that Quintillus was put to death. He was a man of high birth, and one of the principal senators, but he lived in the country, far from public affairs and intrigues. He died in the antique manner. Being condemned upon calumnious depositions, he ordered to be brought out the articles he had long before prepared for his interment, and seeing that they had been injured by time: "How is this?" he said. "We have delayed too long." He burned a few grains of incense on the altar of the gods, and gave himself up to the executioner. Other senators accused of various unknown crimes, were convicted, says Dion,[4] and condemned. But the crimes of that time would not all be crimes in our day, as is shown by the following instance, which exhibits one of the calamities of

[1] . . . . ὅτι οὐ πάνυ σφίσι (to the denouncers) πιστεύει (Dion, lxxvi. 5).

[2] Dion speaks only of the execution of Cæcilius Agricola, and the exile of Cœranus who, recalled seven years later, was the first Egyptian made senator. (lxxvi. 5.) Macrinus, the future emperor, was the steward of Plautianus, and the emperor took him into his own service.

[3] Engraved stone, amethyst of 12 mill. by 9, in the *Cabinet de France*.

[4] After debate, ἀπολογησαμένους καὶ ἁλόντας (lxxvi. 7). Cincius Severus, who perished under accusation of wishing to poison the emperor (Spart., *Sev.*, 13) may have been of this number. Spartian speaks of him as an innocent man.

that form of government and social organization. Apronianus, governor of Asia, was accused of employing the resources of magic to discover if the fates did not intend for him the imperial power. The thing is possible, for magic was the mania of the time. Legislation held it in such fear that such practices were made a capital crime, and Tertullian esteems it only just, since this rash curiosity supposes in all cases evil designs.[1] Apronianus was condemned. The interest of this prosecution is not in its result for the accused, but in the scene that Dion relates. "When we had read all the proofs, we found among them this deposition of an eye-witness: 'I saw a bald senator leaning forward in order to see.' At these words we were in a terrible fright, for neither the witness nor the emperor had mentioned the name. Fear was extreme among the senators whose heads or even foreheads were bald. We looked about us with anxiety, and we said: 'It is this man;' or, 'It is that.' I will not deny that my anxiety was so great that I tried with my hand to draw my hair forward over my head. The person reading, however, went on to say that this senator was clad in the prætexta. All eyes then turned to the ædile Bæbius Marcellinus, who was completely bald-headed. He rose, and coming forward, he said: 'The witness will of course recognize me if he has seen me.' The informer was called in, and looked about for some time, until at last on a slight hint from some one he pointed out Marcellinus. Thus convicted of being 'the bald man who had looked on,' he was led out of the senate and decapitated in the forum, before Severus had been informed of his condemnation."[2]

If he had known, would he have approved it? He had not designated Marcellinus in the papers which he had sent in to the senate, and perhaps he would have remembered that he himself, under Commodus, was in great peril by reason of a similar accusation.[3]

[1] *Apol.*, 35.

[2] Dion, lxxvi. 8–9. This narrative, which I have been obliged to abridge, brings to light the method of procedure: it shows that a secret written investigation was first made by the imperial secretary *a cognitionibus;* that the report contained the name of the official who had directed the investigation, the names of the witnesses, the results of the inquiry, and the statement that it had been submitted to the emperor and was by him transmitted to the senate. Cf. Cuq, *le Magister sacrarum largitionum*, p. 124.

[3] Sent by Commodus to the prefects of the prætorian guard, he was acquitted by them. (Spart., *Sev.*, 4.)

But what we have to observe is this terror in the senate; this joy in directing towards a man probably innocent the blow suspended over the heads of all; this haste in causing instant execution to follow upon the sentence; this depriving the accused of all the guarantees of a fair justice, and the condemned of the benefit of that law of Tiberius requiring a delay of ten days. By this we see that more fatal than the despotism of the Cæsars was the base servility of those who surrounded the ruler, and who, not making use of existing laws to restrain him, left men no other resource against him but that of conspiracy.

Were there conspiracies under Severus? Certain witnesses assert that there were. His life was often in danger, says Ammianus Marcellinus,[1] and inscriptions contain thanks to the gods for having protected the emperor and his family against the guilty machinations of the enemies of the State. Ammianus Marcellinus names one only of these plots, the one attributed to Plautianus, and it is difficult for all the inscriptions (one of which is dated 208) to be explained as referring to one event.[2] Defended by the devotion of his prætorians and his legions, having two sons grown to manhood whom a conspirator must also strike at the same time with their father, Severus had nothing to fear. Between the death of Plautianus and the departure of the emperor for Britain, Dion mentions no other condemnations than those of which we have just spoken. As this historian does not believe in the treason of Plautianus, and mentions no others, we are authorized in believing that there were none, and that this source of the greatest iniquities was dried up.

Severus, however, has a very bad name, and he merits it by reason of the executions which he caused to follow each civil war,

[1] xxix. 1. He mentions, it is true, but one (and that a questionable) fact, the order given by Plautianus to a centurion to assassinate the emperor.

[2] Guérin, *Voyage archéol. en Tunisie*, vol. ii. p. 62: . . . . . *ob conservatam eorum salutem, detectis insidiis hostium publicorum.* Inscr. of the year 208. Another (L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.*, 2,160), which seems to allude to some plot happily discovered, is expressed in nearly the same words. In No. 5,497 of Orelli, we read: *Quod . . . . Domini nostri . . . . sustulerunt omnes parricidiales insidiatores.* It is impossible to say to whom Tertullian's language applies: . . . . *qui nunc sceleslarum partium socii aut plausores quotidie revelantur, post vindemiam parricidarum recematio superstes* (*Ap.*, 35). Do these remnants of "parricidal" conspiracies refer to accomplices of Niger and Albinus, or other guilty persons? In any case, we see that Tertullian has no compassion for these victims of civil wars or plots, and regards them as criminals.

and the condemnations that he allowed to be pronounced in virtue of odious laws—such, however, as our modern world has also known. But if we examine closely the vague accusations of writers not contemporary with Severus, we shall no longer find

Septimius Severus. (Bust found at Otricoli. Vatican, Hall of Busts, No. 290.)

that gloomy tyranny which the name of this emperor suggests. Spartian, for example, reproaches him with many murders in the interest of his cupidity; Dion, on the contrary, expressly says that "he put no man to death for the sake of money."[1] Another

[1] lxxvi. 16; but he reproaches the emperor with having been unscrupulous in respect to methods of enriching himself, which is confirmed by no known fact, save his insisting on adoption by the Antonines.

ancient writer[1] speaks of confiscations only "in case of the wicked who had been condemned," and the great Christian apologist of that day considers all these unhappy wretches as justly condemned. Have we not besides witnesses more credible than the miserable scribes of Diocletian,[2] men who by the mere fact that they worked with Severus testify in his favour? When we find Paulus and Ulpian sitting in the imperial council[3] and Papinian in the prætorship, we have a right to say that there was wisdom in the government and justice in the administration.

The ruler who selected such servants was himself as good a jurisconsult as he was an able general. In his council men spoke freely: Paulus argued learnedly against the emperor, and when he published his collection of the imperial decisions he criticized them with a freedom that does honour both to the councillor and to the ruler. By common accord he is represented as simple in his dress, sober in his habits, with dignity in his life,[4] a respect for himself and for his rank. While legate in Africa he ordered one of his fellow-citizens of Leptis, who had embraced him in the open street, to be beaten; and when emperor he seems to have so lived that he could prosecute offences against morals without any man having ground to reproach him for being less indulgent to others than to himself. There have been made against him no charges, except one in early youth, which has been proved false,[5] and another of later date, equally unworthy of credence.

He permitted no influence to the Cæsarians, that is to say, his freedmen and the imperial household, even to his brother, who expected to enjoy a large share of power, but was promptly sent away into his province of Dacia: it was a rare case of prudence

[1] Zosimus, i. 8: . . . . περὶ τοὺς ἁμαρτάνοντας ἀπαραίτητος, etc.

[2] Spartian and Capitolinus wrote by order of Diocletian.

[3] Two other eminent lawyers, Tryphonius and Arrius Menander, were also members of the council. (*Digest*, xlix. 14, 50, and v. 4, 11, 2.)

[4] Spartian says (*Sev.*, 4) that during his government in Lugdunensis, *Gallis ob sereritatem et honorificentiam et abstinentiam tantum quantum nemo dilectus est.* The same writer speaks of an accusation of adultery made against him and judged at Rome by the proconsul Didius Julianus. A proconsul, however, could not judge at Rome, and the error on one point throws doubt upon the other.

[5] Höfner, who discusses this question in his *Untersuch. zur Gesch. des . . . . Severus*, pp. 49–51, says: *Die ganze Geschichte wird nichts anderes sein, als eine gehässige Erfindung.* The reasons assigned by him and M. Roulez seem decisive: Concerning his upright character, see Hist. Aug., *Tyr. Trig.*, 5.

in an absolute ruler, and was the more valued on that account. The courtiers, an inevitable evil, had no chance with this emperor, scornful of the pomp of power, who rejected most of the honours which the senate decreed to him, saying: "Have in your hearts the affection for me that you parade in your decrees." After his Parthian campaign he refused the triumph under pretext that the gout rendered him unable to sit upright in the chariot; but if it were a question of inspecting an army or a province he traversed the whole Empire. He was insensible to the evil that was said of him, and thus could see and act with calmness. A senator whose biting wit had more than once been employed against the ruler, dared to say to him, when Severus caused himself to be inscribed in the family of the Antonines: "I congratulate you, Cæsar, on finding a father." The epigram was transparent, but Severus appeared not to understand it, and its author retained, as before, the imperial favour. Another, a pitiless satirist, had been for his sharp tongue's offences held under arrest in his palace, somewhat as in France, after the prosecution of an editor of a newspaper for libel, the criminal is confined in a private asylum. He continued to attack all men, emperors included. Severus commanded him to be brought into the imperial presence one day, and swore to him that he would cut off his head. "You can cut it off if you choose," said the incorrigible offender; "but I swear to you that so long as it remains on my shoulders neither you nor I can be its masters." The emperor laughed, and the mocker, who ridiculed himself also, was set at liberty.[1] Easy-tempered towards his adversaries when his own safety and public order did not require severity, he was a faithful and devoted friend towards those who had gained his affection; he loaded them with gifts and honours, cared for them if they were ill, and kept a supply of the expensive remedies that Galen prepared for him to distribute among them. He thus cured Antipater, his secretary for Greek letters, the son of one Piso, and the matron Arria.[2] Conduct such as this does not reveal a savage disposition.

[1] Dion, lxxvi. 6, 9, 16, and lxxvii. 10.

[2] Galen, *Theriaca*, vol. xiv. p. 218, of Kuhn's edition. This supply of remedies found in the palace after Caracalla's death gave rise to suspicions. The drugs which were believed to be poisonous were solemnly burned, and Macrinus regarded the son of Severus as a poisoner.

All his time was devoted to the public service, for he was anxious to neglect nothing which was necessary to the success of his enterprises.[1] Dion gives us the employ of his day: "At daylight he began his work, interrupting it only to take a walk, during which he conversed on public affairs with those whom he called to accompany him. The hour arriving for the sitting of his tribunal, he went thither, unless it were a holiday, and remained until noon. He allowed to the parties all the time that they needed, and to us who sat with him he allowed great liberty of opinion. After the hearing was over he went out on horseback or took exercise in some other form, and then took his bath. He dined alone or with his sons, then slept awhile, causing himself to be awakened to walk accompanied by Greek and Latin scholars. In the evening he took a second bath, and supped in company with those who chanced to be present, for he specially invited no one, and reserved sumptuous entertainments for days when he could not avoid them."[2] This well-regulated life shows a man who must have loved order in everything.

The empress was worthy of him. She was the daughter of Julius Bassianus, priest of the Sun at Emesa,[3] and was living in that city at the time when Severus commanded a legion in Syria, and perhaps the recollection of her beauty, as well as the fact that an astrological prediction had declared that she was to be a sovereign's wife, decided him to ask her in marriage. There is ascribed to her an adroitness which, in her masculine intellect, was allied to audacity. It is she, we are assured, who decided Severus to assume the purple.[4] In return, he showed her great respect. He took her with him on his expeditions, and as he

The murderer of Geta's 20,000 partisans had no need of this discreet method of being rid of his adversaries; but succeeding governments always believe that the dishonour of the dead is to the advantage of the living.

[1] *ἐπιμελὴς μὲν πάντων ὧν πρᾶξαι ἤθελεν* (Dion, lxxvi. 16). Herodian (iii. 32 and 43) shows him very assiduous in his public duties.

[2] Dion, lxxvi. 17.

[3] She was born in 170, in modest circumstances, *ἐκ δημοτικοῦ γένους* (Dion, lxxviii. 24). The priesthood of Elagabalus at Emesa was, however, hereditary, and its high priests had been called kings up to the time of Vespasian (Dion, liv. 9). Domitian was the emperor who began the imperial coinage at Emesa. Jamblichus, a neo-Platonic philosopher of the fourth century, claimed descent from this royal house.

[4] At least Capitolinus (*Alb.*, 3) says of Severus: . . . . *illorum* (Albinus and Niger) *utrumque bello oppressisse, maxime precibus uxoris adductus.*

allowed himself to be called *dominus noster*, "the master," she called herself *domna*, "the mistress,"[1] and the further title was

The Empress Julia Pia Domna. (Bust found at Rome. Vatican, Rotunda, No. 554.)

given her "mother of the camps," and of the senate and the country, and even the whole Roman people.[2]

This empress has had in history the sad notoriety of being the mother of Caracalla, and later authors, collecting the evil reports current among this people, "whose tongues were ever in

[1] The Romans were able to give this meaning to the word *domna*, but, according to Suidas (s. v. Δόμνος) the word was a Syrian proper name, and everything seems to confirm this opinion of Suidas.

[2] Orelli, No. 4,945, and L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg., passim.* Herzberg (*Gesch. Griechenl.*, vol. ii. p. 422) shows by many inscriptions the popularity of Julia Domna among the Greeks, who honoured her as "a new Demeter." In respect to coins, see Cohen, vol. iii. pp. 333 *et seq.*

revolt,"[1] have reproached her with many immoralities; but they also accuse her of conspiring against the emperor. Dion speaks of neither accusation, and the absurdity of the second throws doubt upon the former, even though it were not considered that her elevated mind, her four children,[2] and her rank ought to have protected her from going astray. She had an inquiring mind, directed towards the great problems of life, for she was ill-satisfied with the ideas and beliefs at that time current in the world. In the palace she had gathered about her a circle[3] of intellectual men where all subjects were discussed, and whence a contemporary perhaps derived the idea of his Banquet of Learned Men (*Deipno-sophistæ*).[5] She was not offended to be called Julia the Philosopher.[6] There is reason to believe that Diogenes Laërtius dedicated to her his history of Greek philosophers,[7] and it is certain that she employed Phi'ostratus to write for her the life of Apollonius Tyaneus, to whom the son of Severus consecrated a *heroon*.[8] All-powerful

Julia Domna, "Mother of the Camps."[4]

Julia Domna, Mother Augusta, Mother of the Senate, Mother of the Country. (Reverse of a large Bronze, Cohen, No. 168.)

[1] Tertullian, *ad Nationes*, i. 17, and *Apol.*, 35: *Ipsos Quirites, ipsam vernaculam . . . . plebem convenio, an alicui Cæsari suo parcat illa lingua Romana.*

[2] Her two sons, and the two daughters of whom we know nothing. Eckhel, vii. 195: . . . . *tulit quoque liberos sexus muliebris*, "whom Severus gave in marriage after he became emperor." (Tillemont, vol. iii. p. 592.)

[3] . . . . *τοῦ περὶ αὐτὸν* (Philostratus, *Vita Apoll.*, i. 3). . . . . *τοῖς περὶ τὴν Ἰουλίαν γεωμέτραις τε καὶ φιλοσόφοις* (*ibid.*, ii. 30).

[4] The empress veiled, holding a patera over an altar; in front of her, three military standards. (Cohen, No. 176.)

[5] This sort of work was of ancient Greek origin; Plato gave an example of them, which Lucian followed. It is not certain, therefore, that Athenæus was inspired by what passed at the court of Severus. At the same time, among the guests in the work of Athenæus are Ulpian and Galen, two intimates of the imperial palace, and the entertainment is represented as taking place in Rome, where it is given by the wealthy Larensius.

[6] . . . . *τῆς φιλοσόφου Ἰουλίας* (Philostratus, *ibid.*, ii. 30).

[7] The book was dedicated to a woman who greatly admired the Academy, but the dedication, which contained her name, is lost, and we are at liberty to choose between Arria and the Empress Julia.

[8] Dion, lxxvii. 18. Many cities in Greece and Asia had already made a divinity of Apollonius (Philostratus, *Vita Apoll.*, i. 5), and Aurelian erected altars to him (Vopiscus, *Aur.*, 24). The Christians themselves believed in his miracles and in the oracles given by his statue;

during her son's reign, she still philosophized while ruling the Empire,[1] and preserved her intellectual tastes until her death; and these tastes lingered upon the Palatine after her time: a half century later the empress Salonina took pleasure in conversing with Plotinus.

Apollonius of Tyana, on a Medallion in the *Cabinet de France*.

With Julia Domna were her sister and her two nieces, also famous for their beauty: Julia Mæsa, who later was able with her own hand to avenge her race by overthrowing an emperor, and twice caused the purple to be conferred on boys whom she had selected; Julia Soæmias, who is represented on coins as the Heavenly Virgin, but whom Lampridius accuses of mundane frailties, a reputation due perhaps to her son Elagabalus; and third, the high-minded Mamæa, doubly mother to Alexander, by blood and by the education she gave this young prince, in whom men delighted to recognize a new Marcus Aurelius. Deeply interested in the great movement of the intellectual world of her time, Mamæa desired, when she heard of Origen, to know the most learned Christian of his time; and just as the empress ordered to be written for her the marvellous history of that Pythagorean ascetic called in those days an incarnation of the god Proteus, Apollonius of Tyana, so her niece wished to learn from the "man of brass"[2] those strange doctrines which led men rejoicing to martyrdom.

Julia Mamæa. (Gold Coin.)

Into this circle of superior minds we have the right to introduce three men whose names posterity never mentions but with respect: Papinian, a relative of Julia Domna, who either owed to her his fortune or else made hers;[3] Ulpian, a fellow-countryman of the illustrious Syrian ladies of the imperial household; and

this is explained by the theory of demons. See, after the list of S. Jerome's works, the twenty-sixth question and its answer.

[1] . . . . μετὰ τούτων ἔτι ἐφιλοσόφει (Dion, lxxvii. 18).

[2] Ἀδαμάντιος (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, vi. 14). This was the name which his contemporaries gave him. In respect to his relations with Mamæa, see the same author (*ibid.*, vi. 21).

[3] . . . . *et, ut aliqui loquuntur, ad fin.* (Spart., *Car.*, 8). Papinian, like Julia, was a Syrian, and from his youth one of the emperor's friends. The marriage with Julia was made . . . . *interventu amicorum* (Spart., *Sev.*, 3).

Paulus, who together with Ulpian was a member of the supreme council.[1] In the presence of the empress, these grave personages forgot the courts of law, and remembered only what of their profound learning was suited to an intellectual conversation. Sometimes verses of Oppianus were read aloud, which the emperor had paid for by their weight in gold,[2] or those which Gordian, himself afterwards an emperor, was writing in these days to extol the Antonine[3] house, in which the new dynasty sought for its ancestors. Philostratus, a frequent visitor, recited in the palace his *Heroicos*, representing Caracalla as Achilles; Ælian, famous in that time for the sweetness of his style and for his profound piety, doubtless was admitted to relate some of his *Varia Historia*,[5] and Galen,

Julia Mæsa.[4]

[1] It cannot be affirmed that Ulpian and Paulus were great friends. The former never quotes the latter, and Paulus mentions Ulpian only once in the *Digest*, xix. 1, i. 43. Fragments from Ulpian, however, form a third part and those from Paulus a sixth part of the *Pandects*.

[2] The poem on the chase is dedicated to Caracalla . . . . *τὸν μεγάλη μεγάλῳ φυτήσαρο Δόμνα Σεβήρῳ* (*de Venat.*, i. 4).

[3] In thirty books, called the *Antoniniad*, he had sung of Antoninus and Marcus Aurelius. Capitolinus says (*Gord. tres*, 3): . . . . . *declamavit audientibus etiam imperatoribus suis.*

[4] Statue found at Rome near the Porta Capena. (Capitoline Gallery, No. 56.)

[5] The empress took Philostratus with her on her journeys. Ælian was established at Rome permanently; and his reputation of writing Greek with great purity gave him the name of *Μελιγλωσσος*, which must have opened to him the gates of the Palatine, where Greek was

whose noble words we have already quoted,[1] words certainly more than once repeated in the imperial circle, discoursed there with charming enthusiasm on science and philosophy, especially when he

Julia Soæmias as Venus. (Statue in the Vatican.)[2]

encountered Serenus Sammonicus, one of Geta's friends, who dipped into medicine, and could draw many curious facts from the 62,000 books of his library.[3]

more in favour than Latin. Cf. Lampridius, *Alex.*: . . . . *nec valde amavit Latinam facundiam* (3) . . . . *et librum in mensa et legebat, sed Græce magis* (34).

[1] Vol. v. p. 724.

[2] Marble statue found at Palestrina (Præneste) on the site of the forum. The hair seems to be fitted to the head like a wig. The Amor placed beside the Venus is stretched upon a dolphin. (*Museo Pio Clem.*, vol. ii. pl. 51.)

[3] Sammonicus wrote in verse on the subject of medicine and dedicated some of his treatises to Severus and Caracalla. (Macrob., *Saturn.*, III. xvi. 6.) Geta read his books assiduously, *familiarissimos habuit*. (Spart., *Geta*, 5.)

The emperor took pleasure in these intellectual discussions, for the rude soldier loved letters and desired to understand all learning.[1] Before attaining the imperial dignity he had passed in the schools of Athens, *causa studiorum*, a period when he was in disgrace at Rome,[2] and Galen tells us that the emperor had a special esteem for a great lady at Rome "because she read Plato."[3] This Arria must also have made one in the imperial circle. Was it not like one of those Italian courts of the fifteenth century where Plato lived again, and the greatest ladies were pleased to listen to learned dissertations on a world which was also seeking to regenerate itself? But at Florence men were entering into full day, while in the Rome of Severus, notwithstanding equal mental curiosity, men could but wander in the midst of confusing twilight.

Galen, Physician and Philosopher.[4]

[1] *Philosophiæ ac dicendi studiis satis deditus, doctrinæ quoque nimis cupidus* (Spart., *Sev.*, 18 and 1); . . . . *eunctis liberalium deditus studiis* (Aur. Vict., *de Cæs.*, 20). *Civilibus studiis clarus fuit et litteris doctus, philosophiæ ad plenum adeptus* (Eutropius, viii. 19).

[2] Spart., *Sev.*, 3. He took pleasure in hearing all the famous sophists of the time (Philostratus, *Vitæ Soph.*, ii. 27, 3).

[3] Galen's *Works*, vol. xiv. p. 218, Kuhn's ed.

[4] Visconti, *Icon. grecq.*, vol. i. 1st part, p. 168.

Gold Coin of Soæmias.

II.—Legislation and Administration; Papinian.

A ruler is judged also by the counsellors he selects. I have mentioned Papinian among the intimates of the palace. The great jurisconsult had been the friend of Severus since the youth of both, and after the latter's accession to the Empire he appointed Papinian *magister libellorum*.[1] This office obliged the Chief Secretary to settle the doubts of judges, to reply to questions from governors, and to attend to petitions of private individuals. The *rescripta*, in such cases issued frequently, formed exceptions to the common law. They enlarged previous legislation, and interpenetrated it with that spirit of justice which we have seen the jurisconsults exhibit. Those of Papinian have this character especially.[2] His was a clear and sure intelligence, an elevated mind in which law and equity were combined, and he was an elegant writer whose works became classic and were text-books in the schools of law.[3] The code published two centuries later (439 A.D.) by two Christian emperors, places him above all the other Roman jurisconsults.[4]

After the death of Plautianus, Severus gave to Papinian the office of prætorian prefect, reverting at the same time to the often interrupted but very ancient custom of sharing this very great duty between two or even three persons.[5] This usage, contrary to

[1] . . . . *amicissimum imperatori* (Spart., *Car.*, 8). *Digest*, xx. 5, 12 pr.

[2] See vol. v. p. 687. Tertullian (*Apolog.*, 4) recognizes this openly: *Nonne et vos quotidie, experimentis illuminantibus tenebras antiquitatis, totam illam veterem et squalentem silvam legum novis principalium rescriptorum et edictorum securibus rustatis et cæditis.* This is the same legislative labour which England, heir of the Romans' practical sense, is carrying on in India, where she prudently waits, before making laws, until interested parties claim their rights and experience reveals needs. In one of his books, for instance, Papinian restrains the testamentary authority of the father, refusing him the right to put into his will a clause *quam senatus aut princeps improbant . . . . nam quæ facta lædunt pietatem, existimationem, verecundiam nostram et, ut generaliter dixerim, contra bonos mores fiunt nec facere nos posse credendum est* (*Digest*, xxviii. 7, 15). Besides Ulpian, Paulus, and Marcian, there were at this time living, Callistratus, of whose works ninety-nine fragments are contained in the *Pandects*, and two members of the council, Cl. Tryphonius and Arrius Menander, who also contributed to the *Pandects*. The reign of Severus, with still another renowned lawyer, Tertullianus, continues, therefore, the flourishing period of Roman jurisprudence.

[3] For students of the third year, "Papinianists." Spartian (*Sev.*, 21) calls it *juris asylum et doctrinæ legalis thesaurum.*

[4] *Cod. Theod.*, i. 4, *lex unica de responsis prudentium.*

[5] Herod., iii. 8. In the reign of Caligula we find two prætorian prefects (Suet., *Cal.*,

all the military institutions of the Empire, was required by the importance of the office and the variety of talents it required.

Papinian had for colleague a soldier, Mæcius Lætus; and when we see at the head of the army the valiant and able defender of Nisibis,[1] and at the head of the civil administration the jurisconsult of whom an old writer says, "his love for justice and his understanding of it were equal," we must feel sure that the State was well served by these two men who, for eight years, remained as much the friends as the ministers of the emperor. Unfortunately, we have but little information in respect to their labours.

The legislative work of Severus was, however, considerable: the fragments of his rescripts surpass in number those of his most active predecessors. "He made many excellent laws," says Aurelius Victor, and Tertullian adds, "useful laws;" for he congratulates the emperor, calling him "the most conservative of rulers,"[2] on having reformed the Papian Poppæan Law, "which was almost a whole code in itself."[3] Unfortunately, there exists scarcely anything of this legislation, and most of the rescripts of Severus which are left to us are merely applications of early law which served the jurisconsults in defining jurisprudence.[4] In respect to the history of Roman legislation, these rescripts, therefore, have little importance; but they have much in reference to political history, for they show in what spirit this emperor caused the laws to be executed, and this spirit is one of benevolent equity, which we are bound to keep in remembrance: *benignissime rescripsit*, says a jurisconsult. He himself marked this character of his administration, when, in a speech which he caused his son to read to the senate, he called upon the Conscript Fathers to soften the rigour

56), and also two in the time of Nero (Plut., *Galba*, 8; Tac., *Hist.*, iv. 2) and under Antoninus.

[1] See p. 70. An inscription of May 28th, 205, shows them both prætorian prefects. (Or.-Henzen, No. 5,603.)

[2] *Legum conditor longe æquabilium* (Aur. Victor, *de Cæs.*, 20). *Constantissimus principum* (Tert., *Apol.*, i. 4).

[3] The Christians desired the suppression of this law, which was decreed by Constantine (*Code*, viii. 58, 1).

[4] Many imperial rescripts may be compared to the decrees of the French Court of Cassation, whose dates do not determine the date of the legislative provision sanctioned by the decree, nor even that of the commencement of jurisprudence in respect to the point in question, but attest that this provision and this jurisprudence were in force at the period where history meets them, and this suffices to justify our citations.

of the laws.[1] If a man, says one of the great legal authorities of the time, be accused of crimes which fall under two different penal ordinances, one milder, the other more severe, it is the former which shall be applied in the case.[2] And acts corresponded to words.

To put one's treasures in a secure place, it was the custom to deposit them in a temple, and a theft from the sacred building brought with it the penalty of sacrilege; Severus granted only the *actio furti* against those who, without touching the sacred objects, had carried off the possessions of a private person. At the same time he condemned to exile the son of a senator who had caused to be carried into a temple a chest in which a man was concealed, in the intention that when night had come and the doors had been closed the latter might steal at leisure.[3]

In cases of treason the public treasury inherited the property either present or future of the condemned; the emperor decided that the sons of the criminal should retain the rights which their father had had over his freedman; and this was esteemed a great indulgence.[4] While he did not abolish the unjust, but profoundly Roman, law of confiscation, at least he modified its rigour, and his councillors wrote, in all cases, that the fault of the father should not fall upon the son; and that illegitimate children, those born of adulterous or even incestuous connections, should not, on account of the stain on their birth, be excluded from public honours.[5] One of his rescripts established a new mode of confiscation against which there can be no objection made: "The husband," he said, "who does not avenge his murdered wife shall lose whatever of her dowry would fall to him."[6] He condemned to temporary exile the woman who, by practising abortion, deprived her husband of the hope of children.[7]

[1] . . . . *ut aliquid laxaret* (*senatus*) *ex juris rigore* (*Digest*, xxiv. 1, 32 pr.). It was on a special point, namely, of gifts between married persons; but the same spirit is found in other rescripts. In one of Alexander Severus we read: *quæ a D. Antonino, patre meo et quæ a me rescripta sunt, cum juris et æquitatis rationibus congruant* (*Code*, ii. 1, 8).

[2] *Mitior lex erit sequenda* (Ulpian, *Digest*, xlviii. 19, 32).

[3] *Digest*, xlviii. 13, 12.

[4] *Digest*, xxxvii. 14, 4, and xlviii. 4, 9. In speaking of this rescript Marcian uses the expression: *benignissime rescripsit*.

[5] *Digest*, l. 2, 2, § 2: *ne patris nota filius macularetur*. *Ibid.*, l. 2, 6: *non impedienda dignitas ejus qui nihil admisit*.

[6] *Digest*, xlix. 14, 27.

[7] *Digest*, xlvii. ii. 4.

To sell a statue of the emperor or to strike it with a stone was a *crimen majestatis* which had cost many men their lives; he authorized the sale of unconsecrated statues, and admitted the excuse of accident.[1]

No sentence was to be pronounced against an absent man: equity forbidding that a judgment should be given until both sides had been heard.[2]

If the accuser should desist, he was forbidden to resume his accusation.[3] The same is the law in France when the prosecuting officer abandons the case.

The accused person should be brought before the judge of the place where the crime had been committed;[4] there also he was to suffer the penalty,[5] so that the witnesses of the offence might also witness the expiation; and modern law makes the same provision.

In the case of banishment the penalty existed after death, and the corpse of the criminal was condemned also to be exiled from the paternal tomb. Severus did not repeal this law, but he frequently granted a dispensation from it.[6]

Wards were frequently robbed by faithless guardians, and he prohibited the latter from alienating the property of minors without authorization from the urban prætor or the governor.[7] We have similar prohibitions.

Let us also remember to his honour the rescript which allowed the Jews to be candidates for municipal honours without renouncing their religion.

It is not certain that Severus greatly ameliorated the condition of slaves; but certainly after his time they were much more secure in the possession of the advantages they had already obtained, in consequence of the application which he made in certain circumstances of provisions favourable to them.

[1] *Digest*, xlviii. 4, 5, § 1 : *lapide incerto.*

[2] *Digest*, xlviii. 17, 1. Absence did not prevent, however, a favourable verdict, at least in some cases. Thus the prætor could declare a slave free to whom liberty had been given by testament, even when he did not present himself to claim it. Senatus-consultum of the year 182, under Commodus. (*Digest*, xl. 5, 28, § 4.)

[3] *Ibid.*, 16, 15, § 4.

[4] *Digest*, xlviii. 2, 22.

[5] *Digest*, xlix. 16, 3 pr.

[6] *Digest*, xlviii. 24, 2: . . . . *multis petentibus indulsit.*

[7] *Digest*, xxvii. 9, 1. This important matter of wardship was regulated in all its details by an *oratio Severi*, read in the senate on the ides of June, 195.

It was forbidden to a master to set on foot an action against his freedman by reason of a fault which the latter had committed while in the state of servitude; it was also forbidden to all to reproach a woman with the wages of disgrace which she had been forced to earn before her enfranchisement; it was also forbidden to women to fight in the arena.[1]

If a slave owed his liberty to a forged *codicillum*, he should keep his freedom, but should pay twenty *solidi* to the heir:[2] a decision which satisfied at the same time both law and equity, leaving to the slave the benefit of a lucky error and compensating the heir for the diminution of his inheritance.

The emperor even gave access to public office to the children of mixed condition: "Let not Titius, the son of a free woman and a father yet in slavery, from attaining the decurionate in his city."[3]

A man condemned was said to be *servus pœnæ*. What was to be the condition of the slave sent to the mines, when the emperor's pardon took him thence? The condemned man, said Severus, was the slave of the penalty; the penalty being suppressed, the man is free.[4] The method of enfranchisement is curious: a capital sentence resulting in giving the slave his liberty! The slave's penal sentence had, it was considered, placed the State in the master's position towards him; and the master could not recover his rights by the fact that the emperor had pardoned the *servus pœnæ*. This was a rigorous application of principles, but it must be that these principles were sometimes violated, and that the

[1] *Digest*, iv. 4, 11; iii. 2, 24; Dion, lxxv. 16.

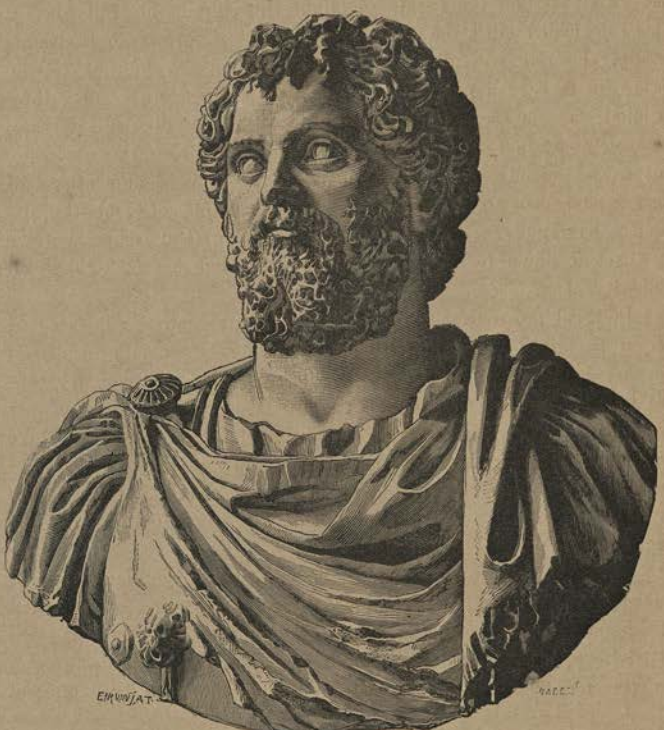
[2] *Digest*, xl. 4, 47.

[3] *Digest*, l. 2, 9 pr.

[4] *Digest*, xlviii. 19, 8, § 12. This rescript belongs to the reign of Caracalla, who in his civil laws followed out the spirit of his father's legislation. Ulpian, who reports this rescript, adds: *rectissime rescripsit.* Alexander Severus applied the same principle to the son, who, under similar conditions, was set free from the *patria potestas* (*Code*, ix. 51, 6). The following are also rescripts of Caracalla: The slave cannot be enfranchised until after he has given account of his stewardship (*Digest*, xl. 12, 34. See vol. v. of this work, p. 308). The patron who does not maintain his freedman loses his rights over him (*Digest*, xxxvii. 14, 5, § 1. This rescript is possibly of the reign of Alexander Severus). Banishment involved the confiscation of property. Two persons about to be exiled asked permission to levy each upon his and her individual property which was about to be taken from them enough to secure, the mother to the son, and the son to the mother, the bare necessaries of life, *ad victum necessaria*. "I cannot change a law," the emperor replied, "but your request is a pious one; it shall be done as you desire." (*Digest*, xlviii. 22, 16.) He condemned to be beaten with rods and sent into exile for three years those who pillaged shipwrecked persons. (*Digest*, xlvii. 9, 4, etc.)

emperor being asked for his opinion on the subject, confirmed them anew.

The prefect of the city had now the entire criminal jurisdiction in Rome and as far as the hundredth mile, excepting over



Septimius Severus. (Museum of the Louvre.)

senators, who were amenable to the senate. Severus ordered him to receive the complaints of slaves against their cruel or profligate masters, and to keep watch that none should be compelled to a life of shame.[1]

[1] . . . . *officium præf. urbi datum* . . . . *ut mancipia tueatur, ne prostituantur* (*Digest*, i. 12, 1, § 8) . . . . *ut servos de dominis querentes audiat si sævitiam, si duritiam, si famem, qua*

There were, especially in the army, many slaves belonging to several masters at once. Severus decided that if one of the latter enfranchised the common slave, the co-proprietor or proprietors should be obliged to sell to him their share at a price fixed by the prætor, so that the freedman might thus obtain his full liberty. This rule lasted until the time of Justinian. Contrary to Hadrian's rescript, he did not allow the common slaves to be put to the torture in case of a prosecution of one of the masters; and calling to mind that the law did not permit, save in certain defined cases, confessions against the master to be extorted from the slave by torture, he added: so much the more are their denunciations of their masters not to be received.[1] This principle of domestic discipline having been so often violated under bad emperors, we must set it down to the credit of Severus that he made its legal authority clear.

In fiscal prosecutions it had been usual to compel the accused person to prove that his fortune had been legitimately acquired; Severus decided that it was the business of the informer to prove the justice of his accusation. This also is one of the rules of our legislation. Lastly, he uttered this principle, that whenever there were doubts in regard to the meaning of the law, precedents should be examined, or custom, which in such case, should have the force of law. Local custom, therefore, had not been abolished at the beginning of the third century.[2]

Severus, who took pleasure in directing the law towards milder constructions, was rigorous towards all forms of disorder. He augmented the severities of the Julian law in respect to cases of adultery, but without great profit to public morals, which cannot be corrected by articles of a code.[3] But neither was he indulgent

eos premant; si obscœnitatem in qua eos compulerent vel compellant (*ibid.*). The slave, however, could not publicly accuse his master. Severus wished to constrain the latter to humanity, while not destroying domestic discipline (*Digest,* xlix. 14, 2, § 6). An ordinance of Commodus had decreed that the enfranchised person who did not come to the help of his patron in sickness or destitution should be given back into slavery (*Digest,* xxv. 3, 6, § 1). In article 12 of the *Digest,* book i., Ulpian gives a summary of the letter of Severus, which is, so to speak, the constituant charter of the urban prefecture.

[1] *Code,* vii. 7, 1; *Digest,* xlviii. 18, 17, § 2; *ibid.,* § 3: *Plurium servum in nullius caput torqueri posse; Code,* ix. 14, 1; *Digest,* xlviii. 18, 1, § 16.

[2] *Digest,* xlix. 14, 26; *ibid.,* i. 3, 38; see vol. v. of this work, p. 326.

[3] When he became consul, Dion found 3,000 accusations entered on the lists. See vol. v. p. 644, n. 1.

towards his own interests: he rejected any legacy where the simplest formality had been omitted, using those words which are so honourable in the mouth of a ruler whom the constitution exempts from all laws: "It is true that I am above the laws; but it is with and by the laws that I desire to live."[1]

The law forbade public officers to take a wife, or even suffer their sons to marry, in the province where they were on duty. However, marriages of this class had taken place. To prevent all pressure upon provincial families by reason of interested marriages, Severus decided that an official who had taken to wife a rich heiress living in his province should not inherit from her.[2]

Billeting of military and civil functionaries was a burden to the provincials and often there was much abuse under this head; Severus therefore recommended the governors to observe the rules strictly.[3]

Many of these provisions were not new;[4] but Severus made them his own by repeating them, and some of them prove that the Roman world was steadily effecting by itself the greatest social evolution of antiquity: the slave ceasing to be a thing and becoming a person.

We must notice, on the other hand, the decline of the municipal *régime* which was now beginning. The kind of heredity established by Augustus in respect to the senate at Rome had by degrees extended itself over the Empire. Certain sons of decurions, doubtless in limited number, *prætextati*, sat in the local senate, but did not vote until after their twenty-fifth year, after having occupied some public office, and when death or some sentence of punishment had made a vacancy.[5] Paulus, one of the emperor's council, wrote about this time: "He who is not a member of the curia cannot be appointed duumvir, because it is forbidden to plebeians to aspire to the honours of the decurionate." On the other hand, his eminent contemporaries, Ulpian and Papinian, admitted that a man of the people might arrive at the senate, not

[1] *Licet legibus soluti sumus, attamen legibus vivimus* (*Inst.*, ii. 17, § 8).

[2] *Digest*, xxxiv. 9, 2, § 1, and xxxiii. 2, 57, 63.

[3] *Ibid.*, i. 16, 4, *procem.*

[4] See p. 114.

[5] At Canusium, in 223, there were twenty-five *prætextati* to a hundred decurions. (Papinian, in the *Digest*, l. 2, 6, § 1.)

by the *lectio*, which no longer made the quinquennial duumvir, but by the *cooptatio*. But for these authorities also the sons of the decurions formed a privileged class.[1] We are at a period of transition, therefore, when the early liberties were becoming effaced without having completely disappeared. The curia is not yet closed to new men, but the municipal aristocracy was drawing itself closer and the movement of concentration accelerated. Already Ulpian is of opinion that the decurion who abandons his city should be brought back to it by the governor of the province, that he may fulfil the duties which are incumbent upon him;[2] and Septimius Severus proscribed to all his agents to act with extreme circumspection in the imposition of new municipal taxes; and to his proconsuls and legates to keep rigorous watch over public works and over illegal associations.[3] "There is nothing in the province," said the councillor of Severus, "which cannot be executed by the governor."[4] Centralization was gaining at the expense of local vitality. But later we shall see it was less the rulers who encroached than the towns which made the encroachments necessary.

As we read all these rescripts, and there are many others of which I have not spoken, we are forced to acknowledge that if Septimius Severus was not the reformer for whom the Empire had been looking since the death of Augustus, he was at least a ruler attentive to the needs of the time.

Of all these needs the most imperious—after the horrible confusion which began under Commodus and continued five years after his reign had ceased—was public order. To have done with civil wars, with military revolts, with armed brigandage, and to put every man and everything in the proper place, required no

[1] *Digest*, l. 2, § 2, and 7, §§ 2–7.

[2] *Digest*, l. 2, 1. Rescripts of Severus exist forbidding the cities to lay too heavy burdens on the rich; but also to constrain to the execution of their promises those who had made a formal engagement to construct some work of public utility or decoration (*Digest*, l. 12, 6, §§ 2 and 3); in respect to the recall of the doctor or professor appointed by the city (*Digest*, xxvii. 1, 6, §§ 6, 9, and 11); concerning the age requisite for municipal office, from twenty-five to fifty-five years (*Digest*, l. 2, 11); in regard to peculating magistrates (*Digest*, iii. 5, 38); on the extent of the responsibility of the magistrates' surety (*Code*, vi. 34, 1, etc.).

[3] *Code*, iv. 62, 1; Ulpian, in the *Digest*, i. 16, 7; *ibid.*, i. 12, § 14, and Marcian, *ibid.*, xlvii. 22, 1.

[4] *Nec quicquam est in provincia quod non per ipsum expediatur* (*Digest*, i. 16, 9, 1).

common energy, but this was what Severus accomplished. "He corrected many abuses," say Spartian and Aurelius Victor;[1] "he was terrible to the wicked," says Zosimus; according to Herodian, he re-established order in the provinces; and all agree that he was unsparing towards governors who were found guilty,[2] "since he knew that the great robbers produce the less."[3] An Egyptian prefect, accused of counterfeiting, suffered the penalties prescribed by the old Cornelian law *de falsis*. But Severus took care to have rare occasion to punish, being extremely careful to choose wisely, which is for a sovereign the art *par excellence*, and then loading with honours those who fulfilled their duties worthily.[4]

Herodian, and, following him, modern authors, reproach Severus with a relaxation of discipline, a strange charge against a man like this. It arises from a remark brought back by Dion[5] from Britain, but very possibly fabricated at Rome. On his death-bed the emperor is reported as saying to his sons: "Enrich your soldiers and you can defy everything." The expression is brutal in form, and that very brutality has made it famous. But who overheard this dangerous confession of a dying man? Besides, the words, like many other pretended historic sayings, have a certain truth if they are reduced to the simple terms of what may well have been the emperor's conviction: "Keep the army content, that it may be devoted to you"—that is to say, pay your soldiers well, and honour them, for they are the one power in the State. What he thus advised he had himself done, giving the generals immense estates; the prætorian tribunes were excused from acting as guardians even in the case of their comrades' children; the veterans, from personal obligations towards their city;[6] the legionaries received larger pay, a ration of better corn, more frequent largesses, and the

[1] *Implacabilis delictis* (Spart., *Sev.*, 18). . . . . *ne parva latrocinia quidem impunita patiebatur* (Aur. Vict., *de Cæs.*, 20).

[2] *Accusatos a provincialibus judices, probatis rebus, graviter punivit* (Spart., *Sev.*, 8).

[3] Aur. Vict., *de Cæs.*, 20.

[4] *Digest*, xlviii. 10, 1, § 4. *Ad erigendos industrios quosque judicii singularis* (Spart., *ibid.*, 18). . . . . *homo in legendis magistratibus diligens* (Capit., *Alb.*, 3). *Strenuum quemque præmiis extollebat* (Aur. Vict., *de Cæs.*, 20).

[5] Herod., iii. 25; Dion, lxxvi. 15: . . . . τάδε λέγεται τοῖς παισὶν εἰπεῖν. Later Alexander Severus said: *Miles non timet, nisi vestitus, armatus, calceatus et satur et habens aliquid in zonula* (Lamp., *Alex.*, 52).

[6] *Digest*, xxvii. 1, 9. *A muneribus quæ non patrimoniis indicuntur veterani* . . . . *perpetuo excusantur* (*Digest*, l. v. 7). In respect to the *munera*, see vol. v. of this work, p. 375.

right of wearing a gold ring, a mark of honour which thereafter made part of the uniform. The depreciation of the precious metals and the need of attracting the Roman population into the army made these measures necessary. We modern nations act in the same manner in respect to pay and rations and the military medal, without thinking that we corrupt our troops. And these expenses did not exhaust the treasury, for the finances were never in a more flourishing condition.[1] Herodian says further that he authorized the legionaries "to dwell with their wives."[2] This was a measure of morality. Since the establishment of permanent armies it had been the rule that the soldier should not marry. "The law does not permit it," says Dion; "to certain veterans the emperor gives the right to contract legitimate marriages," adds Gaius,[3] designating the soldiers who obtained the honourable discharge. In the beginning of the third century Tertullian refers to this principle.[4] But nature asserted her rights; profligate women followed the armies, and in the villages which by degrees gathered about the encampments were countless families which the law did not recognize.[5] The emperor, who had increased the severity of the penalties against

[1] We have the proof of this in the immense resources which were allowed to remain in money (Herod., iii. 49, and Spart., *Sev.*, 12: *Filiis suis . . . . tantum reliquit quantum nullus imperatorum*), and in supplies of all sorts. Severus established the rule, or perhaps renewed it, following Trajan (Lamp., *Elag.*, 26), that there always be seven years' supply of corn in Rome; this was better than the old French *greniers d'abondance*, but in an economic point of view it was a very bad measure.

[2] *γυναιξί τε συνοικεῖν* (iii. 8). Marriage is permitted in the English army, but with restrictions which greatly reduce the disadvantages of this custom. Those designated as "non-commissioned officers holding the rank of first or second class staff-sergeant," etc., may marry. Among the non-commissioned officers three out of four or five, four out of six or seven, six out of ten, according to the grade, and among the soldiers four per cent. (formerly seven) can obtain this permission. These married couples have a right to a furnished room in barracks; the wife and the children receive half and quarter rations; or, when the family does not accompany its head into the colonies, an indemnity of sixpence a day for the wife and twopence for each child. (Circular of the War Office, April 1st, 1871.) These expenses of pay and lodging are possible in the case of a small army like the English; but they would have imposed tremendous burdens upon the Roman government, and the more since the authorization granted by Severus did not contain those unjust restrictions which, in the English army, make marriage a premium reserved for only one soldier out of twenty-five.

[3] Tac., *Ann.*, xiv. 22; Dion, lx. 24; *Inst.*, i. 57. The veterans of the legions had no need of this authorization, being all citizens, but it was necessary for the veterans of the auxiliary troops, who were not so.

[4] *Exhort. ad Cast.*, 12.

[5] When the soldiers in the camp of Emesa rose in insurrection against Macrinus they called in their wives and children from the adjacent towns to shelter them behind the fortifications of the camp. Many of these families had been legitimated by Severus.

adultery, was extremely displeased at this immorality.[1] Domitian had already granted to the veterans, without discharging them, the *jus connubii*. The soldiers took advantage of this new right to establish their families near the camps and to live with them; from this resulted disadvantages which a firm hand and some simple regulations of the service would have been able to prevent. Severus had the necessary firmness, but his successors had not, and the discipline of the army was impaired.

The religious observance of the military oath, to which the armies of Trajan and Hadrian were still faithful, had been much weakened at the accession of Severus. We have seen under Commodus the insurrection of the legions of Britain; upon his death, of the prætorians; and later of all the armies. Severus himself in the beginning had to subdue in his own camp two seditions; in Rome a third;[2] and a fourth in the province of Arabia. He restored discipline at first by giving the example of military virtues; at Lyons he fought as a common soldier; in Mesopotamia the army suffered with thirst and would not drink the foul water of a marsh: in sight of all men he drank a great cupful of it.[3] Then he would not allow a fault-finding spirit to make its way among the troops: a tribune of the prætorian cohorts expiated by death some cowardly words.[4] Finally, he banished disorder and indolence from the camps. More than one governor, it is probable, received from him a letter similar to this which he one day sent to a legate in Gaul: "Is it not a disgrace that we cannot imitate the discipline of those whom we have conquered? Your soldiers roam about the country, and your tribunes are at the bath in the middle of the day. . . . . They eat in taverns and sleep in houses of debauchery. They spend their time in eating and drinking and singing; their whole occupation is gluttony and

[1] The wives of soldiers who had accompanied their husbands, absent on service for the State, did not incur foreclusion when they had allowed the legal delay to pass before entering on a temporary action. (Rescripts of the year 227. *Code*, ii. 52, 1–2.) At this date the legal condition of the soldier's wife was therefore well-established, and the rescript of Severus was in full force.

[2] Spart., *Sev.*, 7 and 8. On the day after his entry into Rome, at the Red Rocks, and at Atra.

[3] Dion, lxxv. 2.

[4] See p. 73. He condemned to exile again the deserter who after five years ventured to return. (*Digest*, xlix. 16, 13, § 6.)

drunkenness. Should we see such things if any feeling of the ancient discipline prevailed? Let the tribune be first corrected and then the soldiers. So long as you fear them they will not fear you. Niger must have taught you this: for the soldier to be obedient his officers must be worthy of respect."[1]

These last words do honour to the man who spoke thus of Niger after having conquered him; but, in the presence of this letter, what becomes of the charge that Severus neglected the discipline of the army? A cowardly or indolent ruler may let the reins hang loosely; but never did a general whom five years of war had placed in possession of the supreme power feel that disorder in the camps was an advantage for him, and Severus, who so energetically maintained civil discipline, must have been least likely of all men to feel this. An ancient writer[2] expressly bears him witness that he established excellent order in the armies, and Dion proves this when he shows that the troops broke into insurrection against Macrinus when the latter sought to enforce anew the military regulations of the first African emperor.

Severus increased the army by three legions, to which he gave the name Parthicæ. The first and third of these guarded the new province of Mesopotamia; the second, composed, no doubt, of soldiers on whose fidelity he could specially rely, was, contrary to usage, brought back to Italy and quartered near Albano,[3] to keep perpetually before the Romans the memory of the Eastern victories, and also to be a faithful force in reserve in case of a popular riot or some prætorian sedition. Severus could certainly rely upon his new guard; but he was too prudent to forget the part this corps had played in the recent catastrophes, which brought back the recollection of earlier ones. The second Parthica was a precaution against the possibility of a surprise. Herodian says, however, that he quadrupled the number of the prætorians; this is not at all probable, and could not have been done without seriously disturbing the whole military organization of the Empire. Dion and Spartian say nothing of it, and we shall follow their example.[4]

[1] Spart., *Nig.*, 3.

[2] Zosimus, i. 8: . . . . διαθεὶς ἐπιμελῶς τὰ στρατόπεδα.

[3] Dion, lv. 24; Henzen, *Annales de l'Inst. archéol.*, 1867, p. 73–88.

[4] The author has discussed this question in the *Revue archéol.* of 1877, pp. 299 *et seq.*

Was it the emperor who employed Menander, a member of his council, in writing four books *de Re militari*,[1] that is to say, preparing a sort of military code? We can at least believe that he encouraged this enterprise, and we know that later it was common to speak of "the regulations of Severus in regard to the army."[2]

The Septizonium. (Restoration by Canina.)

In the number of his military measures we may count the division of certain of the provinces which were too large. Serious wars had lately sprung up in Syria and in Britain; he divided each of these countries into two commands; he did the same in Africa, where Numidia, comprised since 25 B.C. in the proconsular province of Africa, formed finally a province by itself.[3]

At Rome the emperor kept the people content and peaceable by largesses amounting in his reign to the sum of 220,000,000 denarii, and by the regularity of the distributions. In his time the State granaries had always corn enough for seven years and

[1] This work of Arrius Menander seems to have been more important than those of Paternus, prepared in the time of Commodus, and of Macer under Caracalla; for it is from Menander that the *Pandects* most largely borrow. Cf. *Digest*, xlix. 11.

[2] Dion, lxxviii. 28.

[3] See the Memoir of L. Renier upon the inscription of Velleius Paterculus in the *Comptes rendus de l'Acad. d'inscr.* for 1876, p. 431, and Marquardt, *Handb.*, vol. iv. p. 310.

oil for five. He built a great temple to Bacchus and Hercules, hot baths, of which nothing now remains, and the Septizonium, a portico with seven stories of columns which would have made a vestibule, perhaps magnificent, certainly singular, to the palace of the Cæsars, on the side of the Appian Way, if the augurs had not declared that the gods forbade changing the entrance to the Palatine. For himself he built upon the slopes of the Janiculum, where now stand the Corsini palace and the Farnesina, a villa whose gardens descended to the Tiber and went up to the top of the hill. A gate opened near this spot, in the wall of Aurelian, still bears its name, the *porta Settimania*. Severus also repaired all the public buildings which had suffered injury, among others, the Pantheon of Agrippa[2] and the theatre of Ostia. Dion is of opinion that the emperor expended too much money in these works; but public constructions are a necessary and at

Ruins of the Septizonium. (From Canina.)[1]

[1] Canina, *Storia et topogr. di Roma ant.*, vol. v., *Gli edif. di Roma*, pl. 267. As late as the sixteenth century some ruins of this portico were in existence which were seen by Dupérac and designed in his work, *delle Antichità di Roma*, pl. 13. Cf. *l'Antichità di Roma*, by V. Scamozzi, 1583, pl. 23 and 24. Some of the columns of the Septizonium were employed by Sixtus V. in the Vatican. Cf. Montfaucon, *l'Antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures*, vol. v. p. 122. He believes that the structures forming the immense ruins of Rabbath-Ammon, on the sterile plateau of Moab, and those of Er-Rabbah, are of the same date.

[2] *Pantheum vetustate corruptum cum omni cultu restituerit* (*C. I. L.*, vi. 896).

times an honourable expense, and the economy that Severus insisted upon in the palace permitted him to spend large sums for useful purposes. There still exist some interesting remains of the little arch which the traders of the *Forum boarium* erected, and many fragments have been found of a plan of Rome, which appears to have been engraved on tablets of marble in this reign; the whole size must have been over 300 square mètres.[1]

Souvenir of the Restoration of Agrippa's Pantheon in the year 202.[2]

The provinces felt the benefits of this liberality. We have seen what was done at Byzantium, Antioch, Alexandria, and throughout Egypt.

In Syria, the emperor built at Baalbec (Heliopolis) the temple of Jupiter, at the right of the hillock on which Antoninus had

Front. Back.

Altar found in 1880 on the site of the Theatre of Ostia, rebuilt by Septimius Severus.[3]

erected a temple of the Sun, on the site of the enormous sanctuary built there by the Phœnicians at a remote period. The ornamentation of this work marks, with its lavish profusion, as does the Septimian arch at Rome, the decline of decorative art. The architects of that time had no longer the calm serenity of the

[1] Jordan, *Forma Urbis*, with illustrations. See later the arch of the *Forum boarium*.

[2] From an engraved stone (transparent amethyst) found at Constantine. (*Gazette archéol.* of 1880, p. 92.)

[3] *Notizie degli scavi di Antichità*, May, 1880, and April, 1881.

early masters. Their imagination had run wild, and they tormented their materials as the philosophers of the time tormented theirs. This period, which loved to make everything colossal, had lost the power of simplicity together with the feeling of true greatness. But, seen from a distance, what a magnificent whole is formed by these vast edifices of Heliopolis, whose mere ruins oppose to the threatening grandeur of the desert an image of the prodigious activity of the men who once filled these solitudes with motion and noise and wealth.

"Many other cities," his biographer adds, "owe to him remarkable public edifices."[1] Carthage, Utica, and Leptis Magna received from him the *jus Italicum* or exemption from the land-tax.[2] The last-named of these cities was his native place; he probably did not fail to embellish it, but no trace is left of any such works,[3] nor of his paternal house, which the city had carefully preserved and which Justinian caused to be rebuilt.[4] Severus had provided against the most urgent needs, in compelling, by military executions, the nomadic tribes who desolated these regions to respect the frontier. In gratitude for the security thus restored to it, the province made an engagement, which it kept up to the time of Constantine, to furnish to Rome every year a fixed quantity of corn and oil. "To the Africans," says his biographer, "Severus was a god." The arch of triumph of Thevesta (Tebessa), finished under Caracalla in 214, had been commenced in honour of his father.[5]

Reverse of a Coin of Septimius Severus, struck at Carthage. Cybele seated on a lion. Large Bronze.

He adopted for the provinces some of the regulations proposed by Niger to Marcus Aurelius, and made certain others himself which showed his care to prevent even the smallest abuses: he prohibited any man, taking a wife in a province where he held office, from

[1] Spart., *Sev.*, 23. Zosimus says also: "He adorned a great number of cities," and Eutropius (viii. 8): *Multa toto Romano orbe reparavit.*

[2] *Digest*, l. 15, 8, § 11. We have seen already what he did for the cities of Syria.

[3] The coin here given bears the legend: *Indulgentia Augg. in Carth.* But we know not in memory of what favour granted to this city the coin was struck. (Eckhel, vii. p. 183.)

[4] Procop., *de Ædib. Justin.*, vi. 4.

[5] Inscriptions, whose number increases yearly, proves the active impulse given by Severus to public works in Roman Africa. See Renier's *Inscr. d'Alg.*, and many numbers of the *Bull. de corr. afr.*

receiving anything from her by will;[1] he forbade the soldier to buy property in the district where he was in service, and the governor to allow military or civil quarterings to become a burden

Ruins of the Arch of Thevesta.

to the provincials.[2] Lastly, he completed for the benefit of the cities the reorganization of the imperial post which Hadrian had commenced.[3] Ulpian has preserved for us one of the rescripts in which the legislator did not disdain to be epigrammatic. The

[1] *Digest*, xxxiv. 9, 2, § 1.

[2] *Digest*, xlix. 16, 9; *ibid.*, xxxiv. 9, 2, § 1; xlix. 16, 9, and 1, 16, 4 pr.: . . . . *ne in hospitiis præbendis onerit provinciam.*

[3] Spart., *Sev.*, 4. The extent of the reform made by Severus is not known. Augustus had organized this service, *vehiculatio*, and imposed on the landowners heavy burdens, from which Nerva exempted Italy. Trajan developed this institution and corrected the abuses which had been caused by too easy concession of rights of travelling. The assistance furnished by the cities remained, however, considerable, although it appears that magistrates using the *cursus publicus* had to pay something, since Hadrian released them from this, *ne magistratus hoc onere gravarentur* (Spart., *Hadr.*, 7). Antoninus introduced some relief, and Severus granted at the expense of the imperial treasury a reduction by which those profited who had the duty of collecting these taxes: *vehicularium munus a privatis ad fiscum traduxit* (Spart., *Sev.*, 14). But after his time the whole expense fell upon the municipalities.

Roman world was very fond of presents; many and forced ones were made to the governors under the Republic, and some were still offered to those of the Empire. Consulted by one of them on this subject, Severus replied to him: "An old Greek proverb says: 'Neither everything, nor always, nor from all;'" and the ruler added: "To refuse from all men would be uncivil; to accept at random is contemptible; to take everything would be avaricious."[1] One thing, however, was worth more than the best rescripts—good governors—and the old authors all acknowledge that he took care to make an excellent choice. One of them, the prefect of Egypt, having been guilty of an offence, was sent into exile.[2]

The soldiers, meanwhile, continued, wherever there was need, to be at the service of peaceful labour, but without letting the sword be too far distant from the pick and the trowel.[3]

Accordingly tranquillity was never once seriously interrupted at the foot of the Atlas, nor on the banks of the Rhine, the Danube, and the Tigris. In the presence of this vigilant ruler, whose hand was so heavy, the barbarians remained in a timid repose. Under this reign we find soldiers established in certain fixed posts in all the provinces to hunt down the bandits of the neighbourhood.[4] Was this an original measure of this emperor whom his biographer calls "the enemy of robbers in all places"?[5] The long impunity of brigands in Spain and Gaul and Syria, even in Italy itself, in the time of Commodus and during the period of the civil wars,[6] proves that, even if this institution was anterior to Severus, it had fallen greatly into disuse, and that he was obliged to reorganize it. This ruler, implacable in respect to disorder, must surely have desired that security should be as well-guarded in the interior as on the frontiers. In view of rendering the repression more energetic and more prompt, he decided that

[1] *Digest*, i. 16, 6, § 3: *quam rem* (*xeniorum*) *D. Sev. et imp. Ant. elegantissime epistula sunt moderati*, etc.

[2] *Digest*, xlviii. 10, 1, § 4.

[3] Cf. Or.-Henzen, 905 in Syria; 937 in Rhætia; 3,586 in Lower Germany; 4,987 in Pannonia, near Buda; 6,701 in Britain; in Africa, the *via Septimiana*, constructed by the Third Augustan legion. (L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.*, No. 4,361, etc.)

[4] Tertull., *Apol.*, 3: *Latronibus vestigandis per universas provincias militaris statio sortitur.*

[5] . . . . *latronum ubique hostis* (Spart., *Sev.*, 18).

[6] *Digest*, i. 12, 1, § 4; xlviii. 19, 8; xxii. 6, § 1.

the prefect of the city should have cognizance of all crimes committed in Italy, with power to sentence to the mines or to deportation.

III.—Severus in Britain; His Death (208-211 A.D.).

To remove his sons from the dangers of Rome, Severus remained there but seldom; he made long sojourns in his Sabine and Campanian villas, but without being able to subjugate these fiery natures. Geta, as well as Antoninus, rushed madly into pleasure. Both fled from the learned society with which their mother surrounded herself, and their father's grave friends, to seek the society of gladiators and the charioteers of the circus. Even in their sports they hated each other with bitter rivalry: one day, on the race-course, they disputed so hotly for victory that Antoninus was flung from his chariot and had his thigh broken in the fall. Severus resumed the cuirass, and took them away with him into Britain (208).[1]

There were no perils to be encountered at that extremity of the Empire, that the old emperor, gouty and infirm, should be obliged to undertake the long journey and to remain absent for so considerable a time. Julia Domna and Papinian accompanied the emperor. There was not a single battle fought, for Fingal and Ossian, the legendary heroes, did not emerge from their rustic palace of Selma; and still the emperor lost many troops in surprises, which were the chief warfare of these savages. But their densely-wooded hills, over which an army could advance only by cutting its way with an axe, their marshes, whose yielding soil required a whole forest to be thrown into it, did not hinder the heavily-armed legions from reaching the extremity of the island, where these men of the south beheld with amazement days that were almost without intervening night.

Severus remained three years in this country, where the enervating luxury of Italy was a thing unknown. After the victory over Albinus he had divided it into two provinces, that the action of the imperial government might be more efficacious there and

[1] Coins of the year 208 bear the legend: PROF. AVGG.

the influence of the individual governor less to be dreaded. Geta, to whom the dignity of Augustus had now been given and the tribunitian power, administered the southern province. Antoninus led the army in the north and negotiated with the Caledonians, while the emperor, established in the city of York, superintended the restoration carried forward by his soldiers of Hadrian's wall.[1]

Geta in a Toga, wearing the *Bulla*.[3]

In 210 the submission of the barbarians seeming to be secured by a treaty which obliged them to yield a part of their territory, he added to the titles given by his victories in the East that of Britannicus, which Antoninus also took. In memory of this last triumph of the African conqueror, the senate caused a medal to be struck representing two Caledonians bound to the trunk of a palm-tree.

While he designedly lingered at this extremity of the Empire, the loungers of Lake Curtius[2] imagined news at will. Sometimes the story ran that a barbarian woman, extremely well-informed, it appears, in respect to Roman life, had given a lesson to Julia Domna, contrasting with the depravity of the Roman ladies the far too virile manners of the women of Caledonia. Now it was a little drama, in which the emperor was the actor and the

[1] *C. I. L.*, vii. No. 912*e*, and pp. 99 *et seq.* See vol. v. of this work, p. 41. Spartian is the first author who speaks of a wall constructed by Severus to the north of Hadrian's wall, an opinion now abandoned.

[2] A little grove which was a rendezvous of the *ardeliones* (Phædrus, II. v. 1), the "reporters" of the time, ... *garruli* . . . . *supra Lacum* (Plautus, *Curcul.*, IV. i. 16).

[3] Marble statue in the Grey collection. (Clarac, *Musée*, pl. 966, No. 2,486A.)

soldiers the audience: his eldest son had sought to gain over the troops; the sedition being reduced to order, the emperor had caused himself to be borne to his tribunal, and had said to the mutinous soldiers who now implored his clemency: "Do you see at last that the head commands and not the feet?"[1] They represented him as uttering specious platitudes, suited to a monk and quite out of place in the mouth of a ruler who was not counting, as Charles V. did, on the compensations of the other world: "I have been everything and nothing is of value," or these words, perhaps more truthful, addressed to the urn which was to contain his ashes: "Thou shalt hold that which the world itself has not been able to hold." Some related that to make an end of cruel suffering he asked for poison, but it was refused him; others, that his eldest son had endeavoured to persuade the physicians to poison him. But a secret poisoning does not afford proper tragic effect. More expert story-tellers showed Caracalla riding upon horseback behind his father with drawn sword ready to kill him; the old emperor, warned by the cries of horror of his escort, looks around, he sees the naked weapon, and the parricide dares not complete his crime. Then we have contradictory scenes such as the declaimers of the time delighted in: in one, Severus, in his tent, deliberates with his prefects whether the guilty son shall be put to death; in another, he calls for Caracalla, gives him a dagger, and says: "Strike, or bid Papinian strike; he will obey you, for you are his emperor."

Coin of Septimius Severus, representing the Bridge over the Tyne.[2]

Coin commemorative of the Victories of Severus in Britain.[3]

All this is very dramatic and highly improbable. Caracalla doubtless showed an impatience to reign which obliged the emperor

[1] The epigram became famous; we meet it again sixty-four years later in an official document, the proclamation of the emperor Tacitus: *Acclamationes senatus: . . . . Severus dixit, caput imperare, non pedes.*

[2] P. M. TR. P. XVI. COS. III. PP. Bridge ended on each side by a tower with four columns; under the bridge, a vessel. Gold coin.

[3] VICT. BRIT. P. M. TR. P. XIX. COS. III. PP. SC. Two victories placing a buckler on a palm-tree, under which are seated two captives. Bronze. (Cohen, No. 644.)

to remind him that the true master was "the white-bearded king,"[1] and he was quite capable of conceiving the designs attributed to him. But, if he held them, why did he not execute them? Nothing could have been easier for the man who in Rome itself murdered another emperor, his brother, in their mother's arms. At sixty-six years of age, Severus, whom a distressing disease had long undermined, was at his life's end, and Caracalla had no need to hasten the work of destruction which nature was accomplishing. But the great idle city welcomed whatever could amuse it; and the imagination easily created in those remote regions tragic adventures, which, after the death of Geta, appeared to all men to be realities.

Julia Domna.[2]

To these doubtful legends we shall prefer the truly imperial words of the old emperor: "It is to me a great satisfaction to leave in profound peace the Empire which I found a prey to dissensions of every kind;" and the last order given in his dying moments, an order so characteristic: "Go, see if there is anything to be done." Chateaubriand says in his *Études historiques:* "The officer of the guard having approached to obtain the countersign for the day the emperor gave him this: 'Let us work,' and with that fell into eternal rest." (February 4th, 211 A.D.) This adieu to life of the valiant soldier, his last counsel to those about him, has become the motto of humanity: *Laboremus.*

[1] . . . . *incanaque menta*
Regis Romani . . . .
(Virgil, *Æneid*, vi. 810.)

[2] Cameo in agate onyx (two layers) hung to a collar found in 1809 at Naix (Meuse), the ancient Nasium, capital of the Leuci.

Severus had written the history of his life, and it was doubtless his will that, after the example of the Testament of Augustus, a summary of it should be engraved on marble. At least, in the time of Spartian, it was to be read upon the portico built by Caracalla.

For the next eighty years no succeeding emperor died, as did Severus, in his bed. That Severus had this good fortune was due to great wisdom on his part, and to the State it was a great advantage; for this reign of eighteen years ending quietly proves how thoroughly he had introduced order everywhere.

He was lacking in gentleness, a quality charming in the individual but often tending to weakness in the ruler. When Julian compares the Cæsars in the assembly of the gods, Silenus cries out at sight of Severus: "Of that man I shall say nothing; I am afraid of his savage and inexorable temper." Severe on principle, he struck heavy blows, so that he might not have to strike often,[1] and in his autobiography, which the old writers believed authentic,[2] he justified his severities. But these heavy blows have resounded so far that posterity still hears them, and Severus remains the man of his name.[3] Contemporaries judged differently,[4] and he was greatly lamented. Let us read his history, remembering that the principal duty of an emperor of that century was to secure order to 100,000,000 men, and we shall say of him more truly even than it was said of Louis XI. of France: "All things considered, he was a king."

[1] . . . . *quo deinceps mitius* (Aur. Vict., *de Cæs.*, 20).

[2] . . . . *abs se texta, ornatu et fide paribus composuit* (Aur. Vict., *de Cæs.*, 20).

[3] *Imperator vere nominis sui, vere Pertinax, vere Severus* (Spart., *Sev.*, 14).

[4] *Judicium de eo post mortem magnum omnium fuit . . . . ac multum post mortem amatus (ibid.*, 19). . . . . *ab Afris ut deus habetur (ibid.*, 13).

[5] Silver coin, with the legend: PROFECTIO AVG. (Cohen, No. 343.)

Septimius Severus on Horseback holding a Lance.[5]

CHAPTER XC.

THE CHURCH AT THE BEGINNING OF THE THIRD CENTURY.

I.—General Condition of Minds; Tendency to Mysticism; The Alexandrians.

THE third century is the heroic age of the Christian society which we have seen forming in obscurity and gaining growth in silence. At this period it possesses all its means of action, and the mortal struggle begins between it and the Empire. The moment has come then to measure the forces of the two combatants. We are acquainted with those of the one, the State; let us look at those of the other, the Church.

In the preceding volume[1] we have shown that the human mind takes different directions according to epochs, and that it forms as it were great currents of ideas, in which flows the best of the national life.[2] The lawyers and administrative officers, the architects and generals, the artists and moral philosophers, had been the strength and glory of Rome in the second century. In the third, law has still some eminent interpreters, but the last representative of the ancient science, Galen, has just died and left no successor. Art, and letters properly so-called, disappeared. For twelve centuries[3] humanity will not hear again that hymn of beauty which Greece had sung so long, and whose echoes had resounded in the Rome of Lucretius, Horace, and Virgil. The

[1] Vol. v., the beginning of the chapter entitled: "The Spirit of the Age."

[2] Hegel has said in his *Philosophie de l'histoire*, p. 9: *Jede Zeit hat so eigenthümliche Umstände —ist ein so individueller Zustand, dass in ihm aus ihm selbst entschieden werden muss, und allein entschieden werden kann.* It is a law of history; and to be thoroughly acquainted with the special character, or what may be termed the dominant tone of an epoch, is the first requisite of historical criticism. The *influence of the environment* is so great upon the intellectual life that there can be no just judgment of men and things except by replacing them in their environment.

[3] On the literary poverty of the third century, see Teuffel, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, pp. 835–875. Of science there is no longer any question; as to the arts, see below, chap. xcv. § 5.

new spirit proscribes earthly magnificence, *la bellezza del mondo*,[1] which man is nevertheless called to delight in. "Why have they fallen?" was the doleful cry of some sacred writers, referring to certain heretics. "Aristotle and Theophrastus are the objects of their admiration; Euclid is continually in their hands. They neglect the science of the Church for the study of geometry, and, absorbed in measuring the earth, they lose sight of heaven."[2] Another, scoffing at the man who was esteemed the most learned of his century, Ptolemy, wrote with reference to the exact sciences: "O frivolous labour, which serves only to inflate the soul with pride!"[3] The highest eulogium at that time was to be "diligent in divine things."[4]

This is the language heard among philosophers as well as among Christians. While the author of the letter to Diognetus condemned every doctrine which had not for its object the invisible, Plotinus wrote: "Why does not man arrive at the truth? Because the soul is continually drawn away from the perception of divine things by external impressions." And it was his desire that, deaf to all sounds from without, it should hearken only to the voice from on high.[5] Then occurred this phenomenon, unusual in the western world: men become oblivious of the earth, so long the object of their love, that they may lift their heads toward those aërial palaces of which the imagination is the sole sovereign.

The sons of old Italy, a sluggish race, would not have had these aspirations after the unknown which are an honour to the human mind; but Italy, in her turn, has experienced an invasion more terrible than that of Hannibal and of the Gauls:

> All Egypt's monsters now in Rome their temple find.

The men and the beliefs of Asia had taken possession of the land where formerly simplicity of ideas and of morals prevailed. The mind of the Orient dominated that of Rome, and the ardent soul of those visionaries from the banks of the Orontes and of the

[1] The expression is Da Vinci's.
[2] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, v. 28.
[3] *Philosoph.*, iv. 12.
[4] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, v. 10.
[5] *ἀκούειν φθόγγων τῶν ἄνω* (*Enneads*, v. 12).

Nile, lacking the ballast of science, roamed at will through the thousand systems of abstract thought and philosophy. New gods were desired, and crowds flocked to the strange worship of the Syrian goddess and of Sabazius, or to the monotheistic religions of Mithra and Serapis: the latter having a remarkably pure moral doctrine,[1] and the former presenting in its dogmas and its ceremonies more than one instance of agreement with Christianity.[2]

In this way, and along every channel, the current of the

Mithra sacrificing the Bull in the Grotto.[3]

century conducted human thought towards religious questions: seductive but insoluble problems, some of which, however, must be held as demonstrated, even when a demonstration of them is impossible. As at Athens they formerly philosophized at every street corner, now they dogmatize in each petty village of the Empire. It is the fashion to appear devout, to call oneself pontiff of some divinity, and the municipal curiæ are full of priests hitherto unknown there.[4] In the century of Pericles, on

[1] See above, pp. 97 *et seq.*

[2] Mithra was a *mediator* between the supreme deity and man, a representative of the love of the creator for the creature. He was also a *redeemer* who purified souls and remitted sins. Hence Tertullian (*de Corona*, 15) attributed to a device of the evil one those relations, which he could not help recognizing, between this ancient Assyrian religion and the new religion of Christ. See vol. v. p. 751.

[3] *Cabinet de France*, No. 2,031. Intaglio on chalcedony, $\frac{6}{10}$ in. by $\frac{5}{10}$ in.. Behind the bull is a priest, wearing, as the god does, a Phrygian cap (tiara) and holding two inverted torches. Above the principal group, the sun, the moon, and the prophetic raven.

[4] This is seen even in the inscriptions. Among the 164 decurions of Canusium in 223, not a priest is found, while of the seventy-one names of the Album of Thamugas, in the following

the day when the ephebi received their arms from the State, they took this oath: "I swear never to dishonour these sacred arms, to fight for my gods and my hearth, either alone or with all, and to leave behind me my country not impaired but strengthened." This heroic oath the ephebi had kept at Salamis and Marathon, when they there preserved with their liberty the civilization of the world. In the third century of our era they still took this oath, but as one repeats a prayer in an unknown tongue. The Athenian ephebeia was now merely a religious college, and this transformation had certainly been effected in the numerous cities which had possessed the ephebic institution.[1] The pythoness of Delphi and the prophetic oaks of Dodona, mute in Strabo's time, had recovered

Serapis. (Bronze Statue in the Florence Gallery.)

century (from 364 to 367), we count two *sacerdotales*, thirty-six flamens for life, four pontiffs, four augurs, that is, two-thirds of the members who are or have been invested with religious functions. Whatever hypothesis may be adopted to explain the presence of so many priests in the curia of Thamugas (see *Ephem. epigr.*, iii. p. 82), the fact will still remain that the greater part of the members of this municipal council had a sacerdotal character, or were indebted to the priestly office which they had filled for the honour of being inscribed upon the Album after the duumviri in charge, but before the other magistrates. M. Dumont has established the same fact in reference to Athens (*Éphébie attique*, vol. i. p. 137); it was general. See in the *Philopatris*, included in the works of Lucian, the ridiculous characters of which are caricatures of actual persons.

[1] Alb. Dumont, *Éphébie attique*, vol. i. pp. 9, 36, and 39; and Collignon, *de Colleg. ephebor*um.

their speech.[1] Alexander even, the personification of war, had assumed a religious character: he is at this time invoked as the beneficent genius who rescues from witchcraft.[2]

This turn of mind is seen all through Roman society. The provincials, who had replaced in the senate and official positions the sceptical aristocracy of the last century of the Republic and the early days of the Empire, wished to believe in something. The Syrian princes had their minds filled with religious visions. In the third century the emperors added to their titles that of Pious, *Pius*;[3] the empresses were styled the "most holy," *sanctissimæ*, and at court as well as in town, the histories of Philostratus and of Ælian, replete with miracles, and the marvellous *Lives* of Apollonius and Pythagoras transformed into divine incarnations, found readers.[4] They were no longer content with the ebon door from which old Homer, half smiling, caused dreams, sleep, and death to issue forth: they sought for that dread passage in order to rend the veil which closed it, and there find something other than the monotonous pleasures promised by the Græco-Roman polytheism. They pretended "to penetrate the secrets of the inmost life of God," by

Septimius Severus *the Pious*. (Gold Coin.)

[1] Strabo, vii. p. 327, and Pausanias, I. xvii. 6.

[2] See, in the reign of Caracalla, the species of worship of which Alexander was the object, and in that of Elagabalus "an apparition of this genius."

[3] In the case of Severus and the princes of his house, it was a proper name borrowed from Antoninus the Pious, or more properly from Commodus, whose adopted brother Severus declared himself to be. Beginning with Macrinus, it is a qualification which all the emperors of the third century assume. An inscription of Gallienus (Orelli, No. 1,007) says of him: *cujus invicta virtus sola pietate superata est.* Another (1,014) styles him *sanctissimus.* Julia Mæsa (Or.-Henzen, No. 5,515, and Eckhel, vii. 249), and the wives of Gordian III. (Orelli, No. 977), of Philippus (*C. I. L.*, iii. 3,718), of Gallienus (Orelli, No. 1,010), are *sanctissimæ.* Victorina, mother of the usurper Victorinus, is called *piissima* (*ibid.*, No. 1,017). I am aware that *sanctus* in classic Latin signifies pure, chaste, inviolate; but I believe that in the third century the idea of sanctity was added. The imperial house, *domus divina* (in an inscription of the year 202, Wilmanns, 985), affirmed its pagan faith the more in proportion as that was attacked by the Christians. The word *sacer* will become synonymous with imperial, and will soon be applied to all the functions which devolve on a prince. The cities and individuals do as the princes: the curiæ of Lyons (Boissieu, pp. 24, 80, 160), of Volcei (Mommsen, *Inscr. Neap.*, No. 218), etc., are called *ordo sanctissimus*, that of Brixia (*C. I. L.*, v. 4,192) is *piissimus.* The same qualifying epithets are found in the third century in many inscriptions of unimportant persons, for instance, on the monumental slabs of Carthage.

[4] The *Lives of Pythagoras*, by Porphyry and Iamblichus, are as marvellous as that of *Apollonius*, by Philostratus. They were not written as yet, but the legends already circulated everywhere.

determining his nature, his attributes and will. All eminent minds joined in the quest of the divine: some by the way of Christianity, others by the neo-platonic school in which the philosophic effort of the pagan world had resulted. Thus, under the passing breeze, the ears of the ripening harvest bow in the same direction.

This condition of minds is susceptible of explanation. After centuries of combat, which had won for itself the earth and its wealth, Roman society had for two succeeding centuries feasted in pleasures and become surfeited with delights. Seneca, Epictetus, and the moralists of the Antonine epoch have pictured it to us, wearied with the long travail for its grandeurs and arriving at satiety, at disdain of the useful and the real. All the great motives were gone. In this Empire, too vast to be one's country, the lofty sentiment which had inspired the hearts of the citizens of former times had now no sustenance: hence there was no patriotism for the Empire. Nor was there any political life. The grand stream of poetry which Greece had poured forth to the world had dried up in traversing the Roman wastes: the artists were mechanics, the poets arrangers of words; the Virgil of the time, Oppianus of Syria, sang of the chase.[1] Nothing of that which only a century before constituted the fulness of life now filled the void of their souls. This people, violent when in action, sat down and dreamed.

Besides, around them the world seemed to be growing old;[2] on all sides the horizon will soon be threatening: without, the barbarians are becoming formidable; within, continual revolutions, of which Rome will no longer be the sole theatre and victim; everywhere the economy of life profoundly disturbed and the State foundering. Confronted by such misfortunes, which seemed the penalty of its past happiness, this society so long tranquil and joyous gave itself up to more serious thoughts: it had the anticipation of death which besets old age. In the time of Septimius Severus, without reckoning the jurists, pagans and Christians produce only philosophers and religious writers or theurgists: for

[1] A writer without taste or originality, who must not be confounded with another writer of the same name, Oppianus of Cilicia, author of the *Halieutica* or marine fishery, who lived under Marcus Aurelius, and whose work, in 3,506 Greek verses, is one of our best didactic poems. See Bourquin, *la Chasse et la pêche dans l'antiquité*, 1878.

[2] This is an expression of S. Cyprian to Demetrius, *senuisse jam mundum*.

the first, Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus, Porphyry, with the subtle doctrines discovered by them in that higher world of mind which Plato had laid open; for the second, Tertullian, Minucius Felix, and Cyprian among the Latins, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen among the Greeks—six men who, in other times, would have been the honour of profane literature and who have continued to be the glory of the Church.

Religion as a sentiment will ever elude the grasp of science, because it is indestructible; besides, the two do not pertain to the same world, and do not proceed in the same manner in the formation of ideas. But science may inflict incurable wounds on established creeds; the Roman society not possessing it, the supernatural had preserved its power, and a religious reaction had swept away the superficial scepticism of the philosophers, as would have been the case with that of our eighteenth century had it not found an auxiliary in "the satanic sciences." From Lucretius to Lucian many had doubted; from Athens to Alexandria, from Rome to Jerusalem, all now believe: here, in the God-man of the Christian faith or in the *hypostases* of the Alexandrians; there, in the ancient deities who retained their place in the sanctuaries, or in the new gods which the East was continually giving to the Romans.

In speaking thus, we of course leave out of account the crowd which follows without thinking—that which Lucian in his *Jupiter Tragœdus* has called "the vile mob"—to consider those who think and who, even under the tunic of the slave, conduct themselves like Epictetus and Blandina. These are the elect souls who influence others and by whom moral revolutions are accomplished; they are consequently those who must be studied.

Those who are styled the Alexandrians attempted an impossible compromise between religion and science; between the spirit of ancient Greece and the Oriental spirit, they would have wished to believe and to know; commencing with dialectics, which can furnish only abstractions incomprehensible to the vulgar, they ended with mysticism, that is to say, in the midst of clouds, where the multitude could not follow them. With reference to the great question of the divine unity, for instance, they arrived at an abstract and sterile conception, a being for ever separate from the world. While the God of the Christians is seen, touched, and enters into daily

communion with man, their god is without form, attributes, or name; he is the *unnameable*, he is even without intelligence, for intelligence, which supposes a division between the subject comprehending and the object comprehended, would forbid admitting the absolute unity of being in itself. "The gods are impassive," says Porphyry, "and cannot be turned aside by invocations, expiations, or prayers, ... since what is impassive can be neither moved nor constrained." This was the god of Epicurus, devoid of hate, without love and without power: and, it must also be said, that of Plato in the *Philebus*, and still more that of Aristotle, dwelling apart from the world which he ignores.

As the Christian has the Trinity, three persons in one God, they have their three hypostases, in which we may see the absolute principle of the Eleatics, the *demiourgos* of Plato, and the god of Aristotle, *immovable motor* of the world: and of these they essayed to form a divine unity.[1] But that which is profound is obscure, and the people pay no regard to it. This Unity which thinks itself without producing, this Intelligence which comprehends the world and does not make it, this Movement which gives life and cannot have cognizance of it, what is this, in its effect upon the multitudes, when placed by the side of Jehovah whom Moses saw face to face, of the Holy Spirit who descends in tongues of fire upon the heads of the apostles; what is it, above all, when compared with Christ who treads the rugged pathways of life, enduring all the miseries, all the griefs of humanity; who at Golgotha ransoms it with his blood; who in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea rends the stone of his sepulchre to teach men that they, like him, are immortal as well in their flesh as in their spirit?

Thus, to escape the anthropomorphism which had been the ruin of the pagan religions, the Alexandrians had suffered themselves

[1] The idea of the Trinity is one of the oldest beliefs of humanity. It is found in Egypt, in Chaldea, among the Etruscans, the Scandinavians, the Germans, and strange monuments exhibit it to us in the Gallic triads. This myth consisted in the conception of a god unique in his essence, without being unique in his person. "This god," says Maspero (*Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient*, p. 28), speaking of the Egyptian triad, "is *father*, simply because he *is*, and the power of his nature is such that he *begets eternally* without ever becoming enfeebled or exhausted. . . . . He is at once the *father*, the *mother*, the *son*. Begotten of God, born of God, without issuing from God, these three persons are God in God, and so far from dividing the unity of the divine nature, all three contribute to his infinite perfection."

to be led by dialectics to an impersonal God, having no relation with the earth. But it had indeed been necessary that from this abode of the absolute, of immobility and consequently of death, they should again come down to the world of life; and they returned with allegories and symbols to produce a revival of popularity for the old mythology, which had lost even the poetry of ruins.

Their moral tone is elevated, their life was pure, they had restored to a position of honour the Pythagorean abstemiousness, and they had institutes in which the most austere rules of monastic observances were enforced. "When the soul came forth from the hand of God," said they, "it was a fall which must be redeemed by holy acts. The work regarded as especially pious consists in conquering the body, the principle of all the passions, the gross garment in which the soul is captive. Let it, at least in this prison, lead an angelic life, *βίος ἀγγελικὸς ἐν τῷ σώματι.*" "What matters the body to me?" said another: "it is my soul that I shall take away with me when I die." S. Paul was never more harsh towards the body, and Origen, who committed partial suicide, repeated: "Who will deliver me from this wretch?" The spirit of struggle against the flesh is the same on both sides.

And what reward did the Alexandrians promise themselves for these austerities? Annihilation in the infinite Being. "To die is to live," they said with Plato. But this life of an unconscious particle lost in the great All was real death; while faith gave to the Christian the certainty of personal immortality. Besides, they possessed neither a creed having the authority of the divine word, nor an organization to preserve and extend it, nor discipline to maintain its authority. They had a philosophy and sought the higher knowledge of things; they had not a religion, a faith, an absolute rule of conduct and a promise of redemption. Now to move and hold the multitude the most subtle reasonings are useless; feeling and passion are required. These powerful means of acting upon souls were to be found on that road to Calvary marked with the sweat of blood; they were not found in the tranquil gardens of the Academy. This is why humanity deserted one of these ways for the other, in which, nevertheless, for the same reasons some will long continue to walk.

It was the very year of the accession of Severus that Ammonius Saccas, or the porter, opened that school of Alexandria which for two centuries disputed with Christianity the spiritual supremacy. When Plotinus had heard him he exclaimed, "This is the man whom I have been seeking." He was far superior to him and was the veritable founder of that school at once rational and mystical, which, combining contrary principles, could never exert the victorious influence of a simple and ardent faith. Being eclectics, the Alexandrians accepted everything on condition of interpreting all things. Priests, philosophers, and poets seemed to them to murmur the same thought in different tongues, and this broad comprehensiveness rendered them at the same time superstitious and sceptical. Being logicians, they placed above reason the dangerous faculty of illumination or ecstasy, in which man believes he participates in the divine intelligence and sees that which reason is unable to show. Being idealists, with their God inaccessible and solitary above the summits of human thought, they became pantheists by their system of emanations, which made of all beings—bodies or spirits—"an effluence of the divine substance," as light is an irradiation from the sun. And it is by prayer, by love, that they lift up themselves to this absolute, incomprehensible, ineffable being, from whom everything proceeds and to whom all returns. Faith, according to these strange dialecticians, is far superior to all human wisdom. It leads to theurgy, and that to supernatural inspiration, to ecstasy, which is the ideal of the pagan devotees, because "in ecstasy," said Plotinus, "man possesses all good and lacks nothing; he feels neither pain nor death." We shall find the same words again in the mouth of Tertullian, and the same sentiment in the martyrs. The Alexandrians then are in many points akin to the Christians. S. Augustine has recognized this; but on coming out of the ecstasy of their subtle reasonings the former fell back into bleak allegories, the latter into living reality.

Porphyry, the successor of Plotinus, formulating the Platonic doctrine of demons, admits souls intermediate between the Trinity and man, *archontes* representing the forces of nature, angels, divine messengers bearing to heaven our prayers and bringing down gifts of grace, even baleful genii who impel us to evil. Later, the school will pretend to become a Church: Iamblichus, and Proclus,

who will style himself "the priest of nature," will be visionaries or thaumaturgists performing miracles, and a rivalry will spring up between these men who contend for the world. A great work of Porphyry against Christianity was the signal of the war to the death which Diocletian declared against it; but Constantine burned the books of the philosopher,[1] and Proclus was obliged to escape by voluntary exile the persecution of the Christian emperors.

This school, which is called that of Alexandria, was scattered over the entire surface of the Roman world, since Plotinus taught

Christ and the Twelve Apostles.[2]

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

in Rome, Porphyry in Sicily, Amelius in Syria, others at Ephesus, at Pergamus, and at Athens, where their disciples struggled to the last moment against Christianity. It was a noble effort of religious philosophy and its adepts deserve respect for their pure morality. They exhibit, in certain respects, what we shall find among the Christians: contempt of the body and of earth, divine love, union with God by ecstasy and all the mystic ardour. Singular condition of souls, which is the moral characteristic of that age of

[1] See, in the *Cod. Just.*, i. 1, 3, 3, a constitution of the year 449 which condemns all books contrary to the doctrine of Nicæa and Ephesus to be burnt, and decrees the penalty of death against those who preserve or read them. Justinian (*Nov.*, xlii. 1, § 2) renewed these penalties, and this abominable legislation lasted fourteen centuries. The triumph of the Mussulman theologians in the thirteenth century also resulted in the persecution of the philosophers. The progress of Arab civilization was checked, and night overspread that East, whence, for three centuries, had gleamed a quickening light which brought back life to the West. (See G. Dugat, *Hist. des philosophes et des théologiens musulmans*, 1878.)

[2] Martigny, *Dict. des Antiquités chrétiennes*, p. 54. Bottom of a glass bearing this legend: *Petrus cum tuis omnes clares* (hilares) *pie zeses* (a Greek word taken from the verb ζάω, to live). This mixture of the two languages was not uncommon.

the world, and which can be terminated only by a religious revolution! But it is not to the profit of the Alexandrians that this revolution will be effected. "You bring nothing new," they said to the Christians, "unless it be your contempt of the gods and of philosophy." They spoke truly. But this very contempt was that which was to assure victory to the members of the new alliance, to the redeemed of Christ. Let us turn then to these, since the future is theirs.[1]

II.—Transformation of the Messianic Idea.

In the midst of the confusion of systems and rites Christianity had already, in the time of Severus, made for itself a large place. Born in a country which had been for centuries condemned to every misery, it proceeded at once from despair and from hope. Since the captivity the Jews had always awaited the mighty hand which should restore the house of David. But, in face of this Roman Empire which was for them impregnable, the Messianic idea had been compelled to undergo a transformation. Cursing the present, they had directed their gaze into the future, in the only direction by which, as it now seemed to them, this future could arrive, toward the heaven which would raise up a Messiah saviour. The conqueror of the earth, vainly expected, had given place to the conqueror of souls: the new Jerusalem became a celestial Jerusalem.

The masters of the Roman world gained nothing by the transformation of Jewish ideas into Christian, by this new conception of the expected Messiah. The prophets had announced to all the mighty that they should fall under the sword of Israel; the sibyl and S. John condemned them to perish, with their gods of wood and their magnificent luxury, in the flames kindled by the wrath divine, while the conquerors of demons received the promise of immortality.[2] Yet, in a political point of view, this promise disengaged Christianity, in the first phase of its existence, from all

[1] On the school of Alexandria, see the two learned books of MM. Simon and Vacherot, and the more recent one of Zeller, *die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung.*

[2] Lactantius (*Div. Inst.*, iii. 12) terminates his search for the sovereign good by these words: *Id vero nihil aliud potest esse quam immortalitas.*

earthly ambition. It seems as if the propagation of it, with its principles of human equality and community of goods among the disinherited classes, must have introduced the spirit of revolt. But by a fatal exaggeration of the doctrines of indifference, taught for two centuries by all the philosophies,[1] the primitive church added to its fundamental dogma of redemption contempt for the present life.

Pre-occupied with heaven and the rewards in reserve for his

Jesus between two Apostles in the Attitude of Adoration.[2]

faith, the Christian did not envy the prosperous on earth their riches and their enjoyments. He left the things of earth as he found them, because existence here below was to him only a life of trial, the earliest termination of which would be the best, while the other, that beyond the tomb, was the true life and ardently desired. "Let him fear to die whom hell awaits," said S. Cyprian, "but the Christian inhabiting a house whose walls are tottering and whose roof is trembling, passenger on board a vessel which

[1] Indifference to civic duties and disdain for the good things of this world were the lessons given by the new Academy and Zeno, by Pyrrho and Epicurus. "Christianity will combine all these dislikes, will show itself still more disdainful of political action, will preach indifference with greater ardour, will crown all its contempt by despising the very philosophy which had already taught to despise all the rest, and, the better to take souls captive on earth, will offer to them only the good which is not of this world." (Martha, *Lucrèce*, p. 200.)

[2] After a sarcophagus at Arles which serves as altar-front in the church of S. Trophimus. Christ seated upon a *scabellum*, his head surmounted by the cruciforum monogram, is giving the law (in the form of an unrolled volume) to the two apostles. Cf. E. Le Blant, *Études sur les sarcophages de la ville d'Arles*, pl. xxvii. and p. 44

the waves are about to engulf, why should he not bless the hand which, hastening his departure, restores him to heaven, his own country?"[1] Christianity did not change then the conditions of life, but it changed the conditions of death; and this new solution of the terrible problem was of itself the greatest of revolutions.

Despite the temptation which always exists to demand of death its secret, the ancients had contented themselves with admitting, without a great deal of metaphysics, a vague existence beyond the grave.[2] In those old days life was rude; to lose it was often to gain rest and peace, *requiem æternam*, and the Church repeats it still. It is the time when Greece represents death under the form of a beautiful child fallen asleep, whose drooping hand held an inverted torch. But mind becomes developed; conscience is enlightened and projects gleams of light into the darkness of the tomb. Thither justice is made to descend, which society, in becoming civilized, seeks to establish upon the earth. Rewards for the good are placed there, and chastisements for the wicked, as is the case in the Forum before the prætor; and that judgment of the dead which Homer reserved for the heroes is extended to all men. The city of shades is peopled, enlarged, and civilized, like the city of men. The life elysian is submitted to the moral laws of recompense, and its pleasures, retraced on funeral monuments, continue those of the life on earth. It is to this point of equality between the two existences that the Græco-Roman philosophy had brought the eschatology of the pagans.

But the movement once begun does not stop. The development of religious thought pursues its course, and the equilibrium between the two existences is reversed: heaven prevails over earth, the

[1] *De Mortalitate*, 25.

[2] To the present day, man has been able to find but three solutions to the problem of death. The soul, the vital spark, returns and loses itself in the centre of universal life: this is the *Nirvâna* of India and indifference to personal existence; or it goes to enjoy with delight the same pleasures which it has made use of upon earth: this is the love of physical life, the Græco-Roman and Mussulmanic solution; or else, in an eternal rapture, it will contemplate God face to face: this is divine love, but also a sort of annihilation in God. Science fashions a different dream: since nothing is lost, thought must subsist as force; separated from the body, its imperfect organ, it will endure, and intelligence will arrive at the knowledge of all things. This will be for humanity that which takes place in the individual: the need of knowing succeeding the need of loving. But perfect science is the perfect knowledge of the true, the good, and the beautiful, that is, of God himself, and unto that he will attain in the higher life who shall have made the greatest effort to approach to it in the present life.

future life over the present—the latter, condemned and cursed; the former, glorified and awaited with impatience.

After having sought for God, as it were blindfold, in the religions of Greece, Phrygia, Egypt, and Phœnicia, the Romans had seen coming to them a new God who went to the hearts of the refined and the afflicted. There were many souls whom the gross naturalism of the official religion offended, and in spite of the mitigation of servitude, slavery was still to this society a bleeding wound in its side. And now, behold hope is brought to these "desperate classes," as Pliny calls them.[1] . . . . But not that of earth. The old abode which sunlight and life once made so beautiful, has become the vale of tears which the divine vengeance is about to fill with lamentations; and the habitation of the dead, in old times so chill and sombre, is the celestial Jerusalem, radiant with youth, brightness, and love, where

Genius of Sleep or of Death.[2]

[1] . . . . *Coli ruva ab ergastulis pessimum est et quidquid agitur a desperantibus.* We have seen what was the condition of the *humiliores*, and for the immense class of the freedmen, the constitution of Commodus. (See above, p. 129.) In the middle of the third century Origen regarded as an honour to Christianity the reproach which Celsus and the pagan of the *Octavius* made against it, of recruiting itself among men of low condition. "Yes," said he, "we go to all those disdained by philosophy – to the woman, to the slave, even to the robber." In doing so the Christians were faithful to the pure doctrine of the Master, who became so great only because he loved the little ones. In the fourth century S. Jerome said again: *Ecclesia Christi de vili plebecula congregata est* (*Opera*, iv. 289, ed. of 1693). The paintings of the catacombs prove the very humble condition of the artists and of the dead who had ordered them.

[2] Oxford, *Marm. Oxon.*, pl. 15. See vol. v. p. 280, the Genius of Death of the Louvre.

pious souls shall dwell eternally. "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven. . . . They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send forth His angels . . . . and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. . . . . Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all these things be accomplished."

The generation passed and the earth was not rent asunder. But the sibyl and the prophets of the *Apocalypse* constantly renewed the fearful menace, which was a promise of endless torments for the haughty masters of the earth and of eternal bliss for their victims.[1] These unfortunate men, says a writer of the time, speaking of the Christians, fancying to themselves that they are immortal, despise punishments and voluntarily give themselves up to death.[2] The love of heaven led them to hatred of earth; they henceforth had before their eyes only God and Eternity, with their tremendous majesty.

The true character of the revolution which took place in the obscure depths of Roman society is in this new view of our destiny much more than in moral reform, since humanity had already, as we have shown,[3] been put in possession of all the precepts which serve to regulate this world's existence. Life was purified, but became gloomy in the living tomb, where those confined it who pushed this revolution to its logical consequences, and the Roman magistrates, not being able to see beyond its outward manifestations, found in them the two things which form the grand drama of persecutions: contempt of society and its laws, which raised up executioners, and love of death, which made victims.

The hatred of the flesh which the ancient Jews had not known, but which philosophy taught, this aspiration after death, so contrary to the conception which paganism had formed of life,

[1] S. Matthew, xxiv. 29–34; Origen, *Contra Celsum*, vii. 9.

[2] Lucian, *Peregrinus*, 13. See in vol. v. p. 215, what Marcus Aurelius said of the Christians. Epictetus, Galen, and the advocate of paganism in the *Octavius* say the same.

[3] In vol. v. chap. "The Spirit of the Age." M. Reuss, in his *Histoire de la théologie chrétienne au siècle apostolique*, says very justly (p. 650): "The main point is that the originality of the Gospel does not so much consist in the novelty of certain dogmas or of certain moral precepts as in the novelty of the basis which it gives to the religious life."

could not have been produced except in a small number of stricken and suffering souls. But the heaven resplendent with light, which Christianity opened to their gaze; its teachings, which addressed themselves to the noblest instincts of the conscience; the penetrating sweetness of the parables and the grand poem of the Passion, won all those in whom were found the two most potent faculties of our being—sentiment and imagination. And, along with these allurements, what terrors were prepared by these men whose words appropriated the terrible beauty of the prophetic singers of the old dispensation or the apocalyptic threatenings of the new!—when they announced the speedy coming of the last days; when they portrayed empires destroyed, worlds reduced to dust, the trumpet of the judgment resounding in the valley of Jehoshaphat, and man endowed with eternity, either for happiness or for tortures!

Never had the world known such sanctions of moral action,[2] and they were produced at an epoch when the unvarying order of nature was regarded as the plaything of angels and demons who hovered about man, scattering his pathway with temptations or prodigies which he beheld with the eyes of a spirit dazzled by faith or fear.

Under Diocletian a farce was played entitled, *The Testament of the Defunct Jupiter*; we know only its title, but a poet of our day has represented the god, who had so long made heaven and earth quake with his thunderbolts, as broken down with age, decrepit, yet with a remnant of majesty, and banished far from mankind on a desert island, where he tries in vain to warm his shrunken hands before a pitiful fire of briers and thorns. The poet and the philosopher, who know how to estimate the grandeur of the fall, have at least a word of compassion for the outcasts of heaven; religions, less generous, pursue with lively hatred those whom they have conquered; they take from them their power for good and give them that for evil. The Christians still believed in the existence of the gods of paganism and in the prodigies performed in their temples; but they transformed these masters of

[2] The *Apocalypse* has created a new kind of oratory, by placing at the disposal of the Christian priest the terrors of hell and the bliss of paradise. Paganism never had anything like this.

the old world into demons infuriated for the destruction of the new. To conduct this war against humanity they gave to these fallen divinities a chief whom no one had as yet known, except among the Chaldeans, in Persia, and to some extent in Judæa.[1] Satan, who was going to play so important a part in the Middle Ages, commenced his reign; he turned to evil the most legitimate pleasures, concealed a snare in all the magnificence of nature, and spread terror over the earth, now become his kingdom. That which is within us—these frailties and vices which an energetic will keeps in restraint, which a vacillating will suffers to develop—this was made external and the universe filled with malignant beings who were really but part of ourselves. Humanity saw its *double*, and trembled before it; and the Christian who believed himself surrounded by temptations pernicious to his safety, said with S. John: "He that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."[2]

This doctrine of despair is as living as that of hope, because humanity will always have its woes and its diseased minds who can see only the sorrows of existence, and will never comprehend a Providence which permits evil to fall upon the innocent. For many centuries the votaries of Çâkyamuni have taught in the East to countless multitudes that life is an evil, and the Alexandrians had just repeated that one ought to aspire to death as to deliverance.[3] The books of the Jews had also uttered this melancholy cry, which finds response in one of the chords of the human soul: "All is vanity;" and this cry has found echoes in all times: in the Middle Ages, in the full tide of the century of Louis XIV., and even in the midst of our clamorous and busy life. We have the poets and philosophers of malediction, Leopardi and Hartmann,[4] at the same time that the Carthusians and the

[1] Satan is hardly mentioned thrice in the Old Testament. The book of *Wisdom*, in which he appears in his true character, was written shortly before the Christian era at Alexandria. [This is not true in the case of Job.—*Ed.*]

[2] xii. 25. These words are still according to the spirit of the Church and are frequently repeated. I heard them recently in a sermon.

[3] The singular analogies which exist between the doctrine of Plotinus and the Buddhist *Nirvâna* have frequently been pointed out; fortuitous analogies which do not result from imitation, but from the same condition of spirits.

[4] Without mentioning René, Werther, and Manfred, which have brought into fashion a morbid sadness which their originators, Chateaubriand, Goethe, and Byron, did not share. I hardly dare mention the strange sect of the Russian Skoptzi which proceeds from this spirit.

Trappists represent to us, under a religious form, weariness or ignorance of the world, the spirit of hatred towards the flesh, and that poetry of solitude at once bitter and sweet. To them, whether philosophers or recluses, the sombre bride is always beautiful, and, from contrary reasons, they find sweetness in death: *la gentillezza del morir.*

III.—The Christian Dogmas.

However, thoughts like these do violence to human nature, and though the Roman Empire might extend to those countries where exertion and the struggle for existence easily become a source of suffering, the doctrine of rest in God would have had, amongst the more virile populations of the West, only a transient duration, if the beliefs which had produced it had not been, so to speak, incarnated in the most strongly constituted sacerdotal body which ever existed. With a marvellous instinct for the government of souls, and by means of a labour of organization which has never ceased, the Church restrained and gave stability to that faith which, without her, would have been dispersed and lost, like precious perfume which evaporates.

With the Platonic theory of the *Logos*, or of the Holy Spirit sent by Jesus to his disciples, the revelation could continue after the disappearance of the revealer. In proportion then as life became more active in the Church, she prepared, according to the times, new organs for new functions, to ward off a peril or respond to a demand. This is the condition of every great and powerful system. The primitive Church, that of the apostolic age, had become transformed. All that had been free and spontaneous, or vague and fluctuating—doctrine, hierarchy, or discipline—was precisely formulated and set in order for a mighty endeavour.[1] The Catholics refuse to recognize this progressive

[1] Vol. v. p. 736 *et seq.*: *S. John*, xiv. 16, 26, and xvi. 13. See in 1 *Cor.*, xiv. 26, what liberty S. Paul allowed to "those who had received the gift of teaching or of revealing the secret things of God." The constitutions of the Church of Alexandria (Bunsen, *Christianity and Mankind*, vol. vi. yet say (ii. 41): ἴχωμεν πάντες τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ. The propagation of the faith was "by the living word." J. Donaldson (*The Apostolical Fathers*, vol. i. p. 60, 1874), commenting on the words of Irenæus, well says: "In fact, there was a spoken Christianity as well as a written Christianity. The former existed before the latter." And he attempts to

revolution, and the Protestants condemn it; yet it is by this that the Church has endured. What are the longest dynasties of kings and emperors by the side of the succession of her pontiffs, and what institution has lived eighteen centuries? We do not consider that of all the miracles this is the greatest: human wisdom rearing a temple in which the noblest minds have lived so long and which shelters so many still.

In the first and second centuries evangelical liberty was very great and it was gradually lost.[1] Most of the apologists of the epoch of the Antonines did not even belong to the clergy, and Eusebius[2] shows that for a long time there were volunteers for the faith who spread abroad the glad tidings according to their own inspiration. From this resulted diversities which at an early date produced what the constituted Church called heresies.

The apostles and the apostolic Fathers had taught, with some discrepancies which are lost in their remoteness, the fundamental doctrine of the divinity of Christ and consequently a revealed law. This law was recorded in numerous accounts of the life of Jesus, which had at first only a traditional value.[3] To the early Fathers the Holy Scriptures were above all the Pentateuch and the Prophets; even in the middle of the second century, Papias, bishop

demonstrate what were the faith and the free constitution of the Church at this time when free speech was not fettered by the written formula, and when each body of Christians was independent under its *elders* and *inspectors*.

[1] Letter 72 of S. Cyprian to S. Stephen, bishop of Rome, closes with these words: *Qua in re nec nos vim cuiquam facimus aut legem damus, quando habeat in Ecclesiâ administratione voluntatis suæ arbitrium liberum unusquisque præpositus, rationem actus sui Domino redditurus.*

[2] *Hist. eccl.*, iii. 37. What is termed the Council of Jerusalem (*Acts*, chap. xv.) had itself, on some important points, respected the liberty of the faithful.

[3] Donaldson, *The Apost.*, etc., pp. 68, 107, 155, 284, etc. Origen attests (*in Matth.*, xii. 6) that some Christians did not find the divinity of Christ clearly expressed in the Gospel of *S. Matthew*, and Photius, in his *Bibliotheca*, Cod. 126, addresses the same reproach to S. Clement of Rome for his epistle to the Corinthians, in which Jesus is nowhere called God, but the beloved child of God, the high priest, the head of souls. The pseudo Hermas speaks in the same manner. See also the words of S. Peter (i. 2, 25), which are not contradicted by the *Acts* (ii. 36). Cf. Clemens Romanus, *Epist.*, ed. Hilgenfeld, 1876, after the manuscript discovered the year before at Constantinople. Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.*, iii. 34) gives the date of Clement's death as A.D. 101. The idea of a Messiah was exceedingly Jewish, that of a God become man was not so, and it is quite natural that in the early times it should have entered with great difficulty into the minds of the Jews converted to the Gospel; this was the case, for instance, with Cerinthus, the famous heresiarch, whom certain accounts place in communication with S. John. S. Ignatius, dying under Trajan, had combated the Ebionites, who denied the divinity of Jesus (*Ep. ad Magn.*, 7–8; *ad Philad.*, 6–9), and the Docetæ, who rejected his humanity (*Ep. ad Smyrn.*, 1–5; *ad Trall.*, 6–10).

of Hierapolis in Phrygia, then said that it was far less important to consult the books than living tradition.[1] But before the end of this century the choice between all these accounts was made, and the apostolic authority had been recognized in the three synoptics into which the oldest writings had been cast,[2] and in the Gospel of S. John, though composed later and differing from the three others on an essential point, the doctrine of the *Word*. This doctrine, which the Alexandrian Jew Philo had brilliantly enunciated, was related to some ancient Egyptian beliefs, and at the same time to certain ideas of Plato. By giving rise in philosophic minds to the boldest speculations, it was destined to serve as a foudation for the Christian theology which made of the Messiah the *incarnate Word*, while the synoptics supplied to the ordinary preaching, to attract the multitude, the tender and charming chapters of the parables, or the sombre and sublime one of the Passion. The Acts and the Epistles had likewise been admitted, so that the canon of the Scriptures was nearly determined, though no authority had as yet closed or promulgated it.[3] The Church,

[1] . . . . τὰ παρὰ ζώσης φωνῆς καὶ μενούσης (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, iii. 39. Irenæus (iii. 2) also said: *non per litteras traditam veritatem, sed per vivam vocem.* According to Eusebius (*ibid.*), Papias could only have known and employed the Gospels of Mark and of Matthew, of which he speaks with great liberty, the Apocalypse, the first Epistle of Peter, and the first of John. A very important work for the knowledge of the canon of the Scriptures towards the end of the second century is the *Fragment* called that of *Muratori*, discovered in 1840 at Milan. [The best general guide is now G. Salmon's *Critical Introduction to the N. T.* J. Murray, 1885.—*Ed.*]

[2] S. Luke, *in proœm.*, says πολλοὶ ἐπεχείρησαν.

[3] I do not need to investigate as to when and how the canonical books were prepared: a multitude of learned works may furnish information on this subject. My duty is to show what were the spirit and the organization of the Church at the epoch when its power was sufficiently great to enable it to exert an influence on Roman society and the destinies of the Empire. Now this epoch corresponds to the reign of Severus. Under Marcus Aurelius, Celsus (Origen, *Contra Cels.*, ii. 27) at that time represented the Christians as continually occupied in correcting and altering their Gospels, ... *mutant pervertuntque*, and Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.*, iv. 23, and v. 28) confirms this testimony. Origen, who died in 253, in fact says (*Hom.* 1, *in Luc.*): *Multi conati sunt scribere Evangelica*, but he adds, *sed non omnes recepti.* There was then, in the first and second centuries, a great work of editing, co-ordinating, and eliminating, which resulted in an evangelical canon. At the time of Tertullian (beginning of the third century), the canon was fixed, for he speaks (*ad Marcionem*, iv. 2) of the four Gospels "of the apostles Matthew and John" and the "apostolic men" Luke and Mark, as forming the "evangelical instrument" accepted in his time. So also S. Irenæus, who was put to death under Severus (*Adv. hær.*, iii. 11), and Clement of Alexandria, who died under Caracalla or Elagabalus (*Strom.*, iii. 13); but both quote freely from the Apocrypha; Origen thinks "it may be used with discretion." (*Hom.* 26 *in Matth.*, 23.) The author of the *Letters* of S. Ignatius regards the Gospel of the Hebrews as an authentic text (*ad Smyrn.*, 3); S. Irenæus mentions also the

therefore, had its holy book, the New Testament, less poetical than the Old, but far superior as a winner of souls.

Finally, Theophilus of Antioch had just found a word which is not in the Gospels, the word Trinity,[1] a brief and clear description of the dogma which the Council of Nicæa will put into exact language by determining the relations of the three divine persons;[2]

Nativity of Christ, after a Marble in the Museum of the Lateran.
(Roller, *les Catac. de Rome*, pl. lxvii. No. 2.)

and S. Irenæus wrote, between the years 177 and 192, the Catholic profession of faith in almost the same terms that we read in the doctrinal formulary of 325.[3] But all the faithful did not attach the same importance to these obscure dogmas. In the fourth century, Lactantius, one of the most valiant defenders of the Church, understood them so imperfectly that Pope Gelasius placed his works among the apocrypha; later still, Gregory Nazianzen will show what uncertainty existed with regard to the Holy Spirit.[4]

Acts, the *Epistles*, and the *Apocalypse*. S. Justin, half a century earlier, never cites the *Epistles* and very rarely the fourth Gospel, the authenticity of which was still under discussion. Even in the middle of the third century Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, does not know who is the author of the *Apocalypse*, and is not without some distrust of the value of this book. (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, vii. 25.) "Peter," says Origen (*ap.* Eusebius, *ibid.*, vi. 25), "has left but one epistle which is generally received. . . . . John has also left one very short epistle. . . . As to the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, my belief is that God alone knows who is its author." The authenticity of the Pauline epistles to Titus and Timothy is also much contested.

[1] Τριας (*ad Autolyc.*, ii.-15), which Tertullian translated by the Latin word *Trinitas* (*de Pudicitia*, 21).

[2] On this old trinitarian belief, which is found to be fundamental in the Gospels, particularly in that of S. John, see p. 154, note. Theophilus was bishop of Antioch and died in the reign of Commodus.

[3] *Adv. hær.*, i. 10; likewise Tertullian in the *de Præscr.*, 13, and, less at length, in the *de Velandis Virg.*

[4] Gregory Nazianzen, *Orat.*, xxxi. *Spiritus sancti negat substantiam*, says S. Jerome (*Epist.*, 49), with reference to Lactantius, and he adds that he displays more power to combat error than to establish truth. (*Epist.* 13, *ad Paulin.*)

Thus, at the epoch where we take up the history of the Church, the close of the second century, Christian theology had made a brilliant beginning; it was Greek genius which had done this by the mouth of Ignatius and Irenæus, of Justin and Athenagoras, of Tatian and Theophilus, of Melito of Sardis and

The Agapæ (after a Bas-relief of the Kircher Museum). (Roller, pl. liv. fig. 7.)

Apollinarius of Hierapolis; and other Greeks, Clement and Origen, will develop it in the third, in the great school of Alexandria.[1]

The fraternal agapæ had at first been only a remembrance of the Last Supper and a transformation of the great feast of the Jews, the Passover, at which the paschal lamb was eaten in commemoration of the miraculous exodus of the Hebrews, when they escaped from the bondage of Egypt. The increasing number of believers changed their character; they became the mystic repast which derived its name, *εὐχαριστία*, from the acts of grace pronounced in the benediction of the cup and the breaking of the bread.[2] For the bloody sacrifice of the old creed, Christianity substituted one of a nature wholly spiritual, like itself, and which also celebrated a deliverance, that of souls.

Sacrifice, that is to say, the gift offered to the gods with the view of gaining their favour, had been the basis of all religions; and the costlier the offering the more efficacious was to be the sacrifice. Hence the immolation of human victims. Time has softened this cruel piety, philosophers have condemned it, and

[1] Τὸ κατ' Ἀλεξάνδρειαν διδασκαλεῖον (Eusebius, *ibid.*, v. 10).

[2] On the *eucharistia* in the middle of the second century, see S. Irenæus, *Adv. hær.*, iv. 18, and S. Justin, *Apol.*, i. 65–67.

emperors have issued edicts against it; but the belief in the merits of sacrifice has not ceased: it has become transformed and purified. The pagan god received the offering and shared it with his adorers;[1] the new God gave himself to his priests and followers. No more shedding of blood, no more flame consuming the victim, no more smoke veiling the face divine. The gifts of the heavenly Father which sustain life upon the earth, the bread, the water, and the wine, became symbols of the communion of men with him. His Spirit was incarnate in Jesus; Jesus, ascended to heaven, became incarnate in the bread and wine consecrated on earth: *hoc est corpus meum, hic est sanguis meus.* This was at first only a figure.[2] As one participated in idolatry by eating the flesh of pagan victims, one participated in the new religious worship by breaking the bread and drinking the cup. But, seeing the condition of minds, the figure must very soon become to the faithful a reality. At the middle of the second century the Eucharist was already "the sacrament of the altar."[3] If they were far from believing in transubstantiation, they already admitted consubstantiation, and the mystic sanctity which the Lord's Supper had acquired communicated to the priest who offered the sacrifice a more exalted dignity, with the character of a necessary mediator between heaven and earth.

This character was to come to him in another manner.

Jesus had left only two commands to the apostles: "Preach the Gospel to all the nations, and baptize them." This baptism, which he himself had desired to receive, was a symbol of purification and the condition of salvation.[4] In early times it pre-supposed on the part of the one who presented himself for it a personal adherence given after receiving instruction, and marked by the profession of the Christian faith. Hence it was administered to adults only: the catechumens of Alexandria waited three years for it.[5] But the sacramental idea attached especial virtues to it; by it he who was baptized was born again in the spirit.

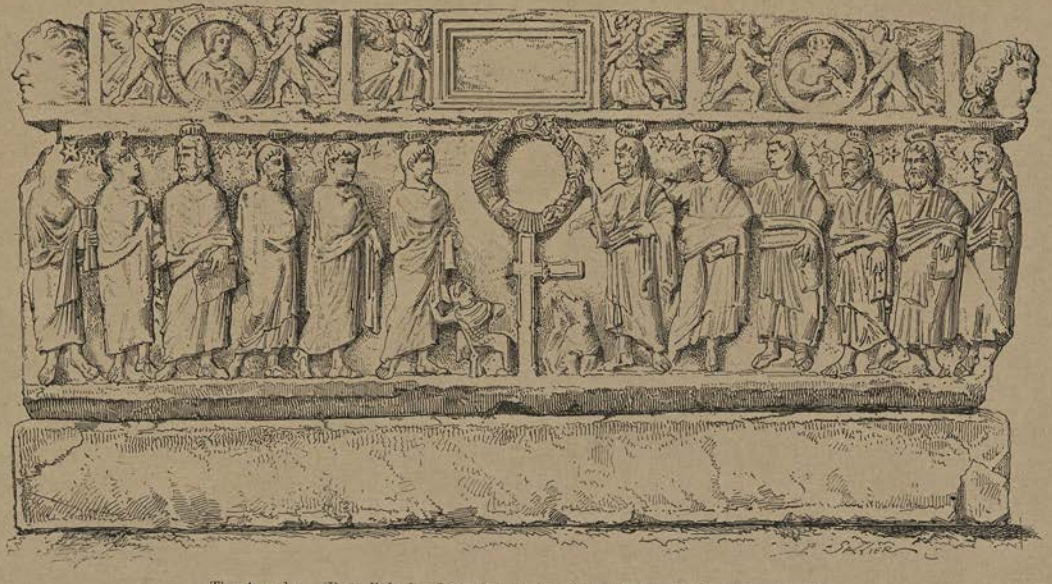
[1] In ancient Italy the repast was always preceded by libations to the Penates.

[2] The *Acts of the Apostles* (ii. 42, and xx. 7) explain the words of Paul, 1 *Cor.*, x. 16.

[3] Ignatius, *ad Rom.*, 7; *ad Smyrn.*, 7; Justin, *Apol.*, i. 66, and Irenæus, *op. cit.*, iv. 18, and v. 2.

[4] *John*, iii. 5.

[5] Κανόνες τῆς ἁγ. Μιχαίαν ἐκκλησίας (ii. 45, *ap.* Bunsen, vol. iv. pp. 451 *et seq.*).



The Apostles. (Bas-relief of a Sarcophagus of Arles.) (E. Le Blant, *op. cit.*, pl. xiv.)

"Plunged in the darkness of a dense night and drifting at random on the stormy sea of the time, I strayed hither and thither," says S. Cyprian, "without knowing whither to direct my life. Divine goodness caused me to be born again in the saving water of baptism. . . . . At once a serene and pure light was shed from on high upon my soul and I became a new man."[1] This efficacy of baptism dispensing with personal adherence, children were admitted to regeneration. This was a noteworthy innovation. The Master had said: *Sinite venire ad me parvulos;* the Church called them and took them. Its action was extended over the beginnings of life, as it watched over the approach of death, and thus it was enabled to keep or recover, in the turbulent hours of youth, those whom it, from their birth, had "enrolled in the army of Christ, *census Dei*."[3]

Baptism.[2]

On coming out of the baptismal font the neophyte was clothed with a white robe, symbol of innocence, and he moistened his lips in a vessel of milk and honey, the sweet and pure nourishment of the body and the image of the spiritual food which the Church distributed to all its members.[4]

[1] S. Cyprian, *Ep. ad Donat.* S. Justin (*Apol.*, i. 61) had spoken of this new birth by baptism, and Origen called it "the principle and the source of the gifts of grace" (*in Joann.*, 17).

[2] After a painting in the crypt of Pope Callistus. (Roller, *op. cit.*, pl. xxiv. fig. 4. Cf. *ibid.*, vol. i. p. 131.)

[3] Tertullian, *de Baptismo*, 17. Baptism was habitually administered by immersion for those in health, by sprinkling for the sick. This rite was also the foundation of the cultus of Mithra, then widely extended, and it "regenerated for eternity" him who received it; but it was a baptism of blood, giving rise to a hideous ceremony (vol. v. p. 704), which was to keep away women, children, and all sensitive persons. Another baptism of blood, that of the Jews, continued for some time to be practised by the Christian Jews also. The fifteen bishops of Jerusalem down to the destruction of the temple were circumcised. (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, iv. 5.)

[4] . . . . *mellis et lactis societatem* (Tertullian, *Adv. Marcion.*, i. 14).

Jesus had said: "Whosesoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them." This was a powerful means of action for the government of souls promised to the new priesthood. At first, the penitent "made unto the Lord"[1] the avowal of his fault in the presence of the believers, and the priests determined the necessary expiation. But it was inevitable that auricular confession should take the place of public confession. The penitent and the priest were equally interested in this change, for the first being only possible in the case of grave offences, the minor ones escaped the action of the Church. With the second, the sinner, especially women,[2] avoided the shame of humiliation before all the people, and the priest penetrated into the private life of the penitent, which permitted him to direct it better for salvation. If the penitent, in a dying condition, desired to be reconciled to the Church, it was needful that the priest should take the place of the assembly of the brethren at his bedside, and the exception ended by becoming the rule. However, public confession was not interdicted until the middle of the fifth century; but, at that moment, auricular confession, the dawning of which we see in the epoch we are now considering,[3] will long since have acquired the power of a sacrament. By the counsels which follow the confession, the priest will assume the direction of the life of the penitents; he will teach them the practice of justice according to the Church, and by the power to bind and to loose, he will make saints destined to sit down at the right hand of God, and the damned whom Satan and his tortures await. The pagan mysteries, too, granted salvation, but by an initiation which was not repeated. In the bosom of the Church the initiation is perpetually renewed, by the eucharistic communion which restores to a state of purity, by the religious teaching which prepares for it, by the sacrament of penitence which brings back the sinner or

[1] . . . . *Exomologesis est qua delictum domino nostro confitemur* (Tertullian, *de Pœnit.*, 9). It is the public confession of which Matthew speaks (iii. 6), Mark (i. 5), and the *Acts*, (xix. 18).

[2] S. Irenæus (*Adv. hær.*, i. 3) speaks of women who publicly confessed their faults.

[3] Origen, in the second homily upon *Psalms*, xxxvii. 19, in the *Homilia 2 in Levit.*, 4, and in his *De Orat.*, 28, is already more explicit. At this moment, the middle of the third century, the two modes of confession coexist, but the confession to the priest is already more customary than the confession to the assembly. Cf. the *Octavius*, 9, 10, 11, 12, 25, 26, and 29, and the *de Lapsis*. As to the laying on of hands, that was a Jewish custom.

which turns away for ever the excommunicated, banished at the same time from the Church and from heaven.

Another sacrament arose, or rather an ancient usage was continued after its transformation: extreme unction.[1] This again is merely a prayer of the priests over the sick, the Jewish usage of anointing with oil in the name of the Lord, and the assertion of faith by dying persons.[2]

The civil law does not favour celibacy, because it renders a

The Agapæ, Symbol of the Eucharistic Communion[3] (after a Marble of the Lateran).

man free from the obligations of the family, and because the family is the basis of society. But in the East, and even in Greece, certain churches or philosophic sects recommend it. At the period of the ancient fervour, some of the goddesses—Diana, Minerva, Vesta, and the Muses—had repudiated chaste love, and at Athens and Rome, and among the Gauls, the holiest prayers were those of virgins. The apostles and the early Fathers did not impose celibacy; there was, however, a tendency towards it. It was the natural consequence of a doctrine which prescribed

[1] Origen, *Homilia* 2 *in Levit.*, 2.

[2] *James*, v. 14–15. Among the Jews perfumed olive oil served for various religious uses (*Genesis*, xxviii. 18, and *Exodus*, xxx. 24–29) and for the anointing of high-priests and kings, for the treatment of diseases and wounds (*Isaiah*, i. 6), for the purification of lepers (*Levit.*, xiv. 17).

[3] The genius which occupies the left is foreign to the eucharistic supper. He supports the frame of the epitaph. (Roller, *op. cit.*, pl. liv. fig. 6.)

mortifying the flesh and renunciation.[1] Already they refused to admit to the episcopate those who had contracted a second mar-

The Virgin.[2]

riage, and this regulation has been preserved in the Greek Church. In order to hold man at every moment of his life, from the cradle

[1] We find in the early centuries numbers of bishops who are married but live in celibacy. Cæcilius, who converted S. Cyprian, commended to him at his death his wife and children (Fleury, *Hist. eccles.*, ii. p. 173), and during the persecution of Decius, the bishop of Nicopolis, in Egypt, fled to the desert "with his wife." (Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, vi. 42.) Some of the records of martyrs relating to the persecution of Diocletian speak of married bishops, and a law of 357 (*Cod. Theod.*, xvi. 2, 14), confirming the benefits granted by Constantine to the clergy, extended them to their wives and children, *mares et feminæ*. The Church recommended continence to the married clergy. (Council of Elvira, 33rd canon; Council of Nicea, 3rd canon.) See in Socrates, *Hist. eccles.*, i. 11, the speech of S. Paphnutius in opposition at the Council of Nicæa. The same writer mentions (v. 22), at the end of the fourth century, married bishops who had had legitimate children after their ordination.

[2] After a fresco of the subterranean basilica of S. Clement at Rome. This Virgin, doubtless of the eighth century, is the oldest known after that of the cemetery of Priscilla. The basilica of S. Clement, between the Cælian and the Esquiline, was filled up in the twelfth century for the construction of the present church, and has only been excavated in our day. The Madonna which was buried there has consequently suffered no retouching, and, with its nimbus of gold and its rich drapery overloaded with precious jewels, offers us an authentic specimen of the Byzantine style. (Roller, *op. cit.*, ii. pl. C. and p. 354.)

to the tomb, the Church will make a sacrament of marriage, without being able to deprive it of its fundamental character of a civil contract.[1]

The Virgin, who occupies so great a place in the Catholicism of modern times, had very little in the early ages. Mention is made of her with respect, but no worship is rendered to her. With the lapse of time the historic person will become a sacred type. This will not be the case, however, until the second œcumenical council, that of 381, which will place her name in the creed to which the Fathers of Nicæa had not admitted it.

The dogma of the communion and intercession of saints will also not be formulated until the fourth century. "At the altar," S. Augustine says, "we do not make mention of the martyrs in the same manner as we do of the faithful who rest in peace. We do not only pray for them, we entreat them to pray for us."[2] But a trace of it exists in the third,[3] and this was also a necessary consequence.

Thus was formed the grand epic of the Christian religion, as some old klepht's song had become the *Iliad* of Homer, and it was destined to be for a long succession of centuries the consolation and the delight of souls. But the new poet who developed the primitive gift was the Church, or rather those ardent communities, those nocturnal assemblies, whose religious wants increased with the contagion of faith. The ignorant led on the doctors, and they, drawing with full hands from the triple treasure of Biblical poetry, Grecian philosophy, and the Gospel, multiplied the dogmas, enriched the worship, and changed all, thinking to change nothing.

[1] Jesus had said (*Matt.*, xxii. 30): "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage," and S. Paul accepted mixed unions (1 *Cor.*, vii. 12–26): a doctrine which a council again consecrated in 314. S. Paul (*Ephes.*, v. 32) calls marriage *μυστήριον*, a word which has been too freely translated "sacrament." Among the Romans marriage was a civil contract, indispensable for the constitution of the family, the reciprocal rights of the parties and of their children, and the conditions of which the Church could not of itself change; but she joined to it her prayers and her benediction. The Council of Trent (sess. xxiv.) recognized that in marriage the sacrament had the effect to sanctify the pre-existing contract: *gratiam quæ naturalem illum amorem perficeret . . . . conjugesque sanctificaret.*

[2] *Commemoramus . . . . ut etiam pro eis oremus, sed magis ut et ipsi pro nobis* (*Tract.* 84 *in Evang. S. Joann.*).

[3] S. Cyprian, *Ep.* 57, *ad finem.* The doctrine of purgatory, which the Evangelists were ignorant of (*S. Luke*, xxvi. 26), was also propounded by S. Augustine.

The ceremonies became more varied, the liturgy, or the regulations of the worship, had not the unity which it has found only in our day; but each church prepared its own.[1] S. Clement, in the century preceding, had spoken of it in his *Epistle to the Corinthians*. This bishop of the city which was the mistress of the world, this *Romanus*, as he is called, had also previously invoked discipline by comparing the Church to the legions of Cæsar in which the chief commands.[2] His successors will end by inserting the same rules of absolute obedience, and the fruitful liberty of the religious life of the early ages, without which nothing would be founded, will disappear, but to the gain of discipline, without which nothing endures.

At the end of the second century the dogmatic work of the Church was so far advanced that Clement of Alexandria, who wrote under the reign of Severus, sought to co-ordinate its parts into a scientific system constructed with the ordinary processes of human thought. "Faith," said he, "is the science of the divine things of revelation; but science should furnish the demonstration of the things of faith." And he composed the *Stromata*, which without being written with the rigorous method of S. Thomas, are nevertheless a first essay of Christian philosophy. Now it is a sign of force and often of impending victory for ideas, when philosophy takes them up and supplies the general formula for them.

V.—The Hierarchy and Discipline.

While the Church was establishing order in its internal life, it had been led by the very nature of its propaganda to adopt for its external life an organization to which the strongest political conceptions have never approached.

The Christian communities of the earliest days did not possess any more disciplinary institutions than they had sacraments; each

[1] See in the third volume of the *Analecta Ante-Nicæana* of Bunsen, the fragments of the most ancient liturgies. The first which it cites (p. 21) was used at Alexandria in the time of Origen; and Bunsen does not think that it can be referred back further than the middle of the second century.

[2] *Καταυοήσωμεν τοὺς στρατευομένους τοῖς ἡγουμένοις ἡμῶν εὐτάκτως πῶ εἴκοντας* (S. Clement, *ad Corinth.*, 37).

one organized itself after its own will. In the time of S. Paul numbers of brethren were allowed to assume an office or a title in order to retain a greater number by the gratification of a very human sentiment, the wish to be classed apart. We know how fond the fraternities, the cities, and the whole Roman society were of this hierarchal order.[1] "God," says S. Paul, "hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues."[2] This strange confusion could not last. The Greek cities had ἐπίσκοποι or overseers, a kind of ædiles, whose duties the *Digest*[3] defines as "those who have charge of the bread and food." The first Christian communities seem to have borrowed this municipal function and its name.[5] At their head, to preside over their meetings, they placed the one most venerable by age or sanctity, the elder, the πρεσβύτερος. Gradually the overseer, who had the principal active duties, rose above the elder, who possessed only the dignity, or rather, the two functions became confounded, in some places from the very first and elsewhere later. S. Paul had overseers or elders and deacons elected in all the churches which he instituted; at the end of the first century S. Clement,[6]

The Apostles S. Peter and S. Paul.[4]

[1] Vol. v. chap. lxxxiii. "The City."

[2] 1 *Cor.*, xii. 28.

[3] l. 4, 18, § 7.

[4] After a gilded glass of the catacombs (fourth century). (Roller, pl. lxxix. No. 5.)

[5] This is the opinion of several theologians, and it is probably correct. Cf. Waddington, *Inscr. de Syrie*, p. 474. We even find ἐπίσκοποι in the Greek fraternities (see Wescher, *Revue archéol.*, April, 1866). The episcopal cross is similar to the *lituus* of the Roman augur. Has it been borrowed from it, or does it come from the shepherd's crook? From both doubtless, but rather from the latter.

[6] *Acts*, xx. 17, 28; *Titus*, i. 5, 7; 1 *Tim.*, iii. 2, 8; S. Clement, *ad Cor.*, 42; Polycarp, *ad Philipp.*, 5; S. Jerome, *Comment. in Titum: idem est presbyter qui et episcopus* . . . .

in the middle of the second, S. Polycarp[1] and S. Justin,[2] as yet knew only these two orders; but the number of the believers increasing, that of the ministers of the religion augmented, and differences became noted. Besides, it was necessary to oppose to the heresies which were multiplying, a discipline, that is to say, a concentration of authority. In the time of Severus the important Christian fraternities had a bishop representing the unity of spiritual government, priests for the religious offices, deacons for the service of the temple; all united to form the clergy or "the side of the Lord."

These offices were elective. The elders chose the *episcopus*, whom they presented to the brethren, and whom the latter confirmed in their office by acclamation. They also confirmed, by the raising of hands, the designation of priests and deacons made by the bishop. By this it is evident that, though the consent of the community was necessary, the real election depended on the chief persons. In this way, order, indispensable to regular life, replaced the disorder of the early times. The same necessities which had educed from the multitude of evangelical writings the canon of the Scriptures, the rule of faith, had insensibly led to the establishment in the midst of each Christian community of the hierarchy or administration, as it will afterwards lead to the constitution of the general government of the Church. It was in the logic of facts, and we cannot see how it could have been otherwise. Without this discipline, there would have been no catholicity.

As tradition plays an important part in the Church, the old bishops were supposed to transmit it to the new; hence the consecration of the bishop-elect by a bishop of the vicinity, and the gradual formation of ecclesiastical provinces. "The bishop," says the fourth canon of the Council of Nicæa, "should be ordained by three bishops."

One of the oldest rights of Rome, and we may say one most dear to the Roman population, the liberty of forming fraternities and societies, favoured the first organization of the

[1] *Ad Cor.*, 42.

[2] *Ep. ad Philipp.*, 5, 6. In the *Pastor* of Hermas there is also no trace of an episcopate. Mention is indeed found, in the letters of S. Ignatius, of bishops, priests, and deacons; but the different texts of these documents give rise to too many discussions to admit of producing them as unobjectionable testimony.

churches.[1] By taking the form of burial associations, the Christians were enabled to organize under the protection of the law, into communities having the character of a civil person, that is, with the right to receive legacies or donations or the monthly contributions of their members. The Mosaic law had assured to the Levites the tenth of all the products of the earth; the Roman usage gave a new force to the Hebrew custom, and, as the synagogues of the whole Empire formerly sent their gifts each year to the temple of Jerusalem, the believers made their offering to the church every month. Many, S. Cyprian, for instance, sold their property and remitted the price of it to the bishop. That of Rome received from a single person 200,000 sesterces, and that of Carthage was able to employ half that sum for the ransom of Christian captives carried away by the Moors.[2]

A Bishop. (Martigny, *Dict. des Ant. chrét.*)

Each church then had a revenue which enabled it to aid the poor and the afflicted, to meet the expenses of worship and of the repasts in common, the *agapæ*, at which the priests, like the officers of the pagan societies, received for their maintenance a double portion;[3] even to acquire funds to establish a common cemetery and to hold meetings there at night.[4]

[1] The right of association was, according to the testimony of Gaius (*Digest*, xlviii. 22, 4) formally recognized by the Twelve Tables: *Collegiis*, it said, *potestatem facit lex* (xii. Tab.) *pactionem quam velint sibi ferre dum ne quid ex publica lege corrumpant.* See vol. v. pp. 388 *et seq.* Roman society had so great a liking for these associations that it formed them even in the camps, in spite of an express inhibition by Severus.

[2] Tertullian, *de Præscr.*, 30; S. Cyprian, *Ep.*, 60. His letter, No. 65, and that of Pope Cornelius, *ad Fab.*, show that the *arca* of the churches began to have considerable resources. Even at this time some of the bishops misused them. Cf. S. Cyprian, *de Lapsis.*

[3] On the *duplicares*, see vol. v. p. 402. S. Paul had recommended this custom (1 *Tim.*, v. 17–18), and Tertullian (*de Jejun.*, 17) recalls it: *duplex honor binis partibus præsidentibus deputabatur.* The confessors were often honoured with a sacerdotal gift. (S. Cyprian, *Ep.*, 34.) The *agapæ* and the Supper, at first united, *κυριακὸν δεῖπνον* (1 *Cor.*, xi. 20), were separated at an early date. At the end of the fourth century S. Monica still brought to the church bread and wine, after the African custom. S. Ambrose forbade her doing it.

[4] Tertullian, *Apol.*, 39–40. Certain slaves even claimed that with these funds they might

The cemetery of Callistus, in which so many popes were interred, was already in existence at Rome along the Appian Way, and Alexander Severus adjudged to the Christians an estate which the pagans had contested with them. The ecclesiastical property commenced then to be constituted, as had been that of the pagan

The Agapæ.[1]

temples, by donations. At this moment it was very small, but it was one day to become very large.

Later on, the Church will again make use of the convenient mould of the imperial administration, and will be able to fill it. The *civitas* with its vast territory will form the diocese, and the civil metropolis will become the religious: the archbishop will succeed to the flamen who brought to the altar of Rome and Augustus the prayers and votive offerings of the entire province; finally, the basilica will serve as a church, and we yet preserve

purchase their freedom. Μὴ ἰράνωσαν ἀπὸ τοῦ κοινοῦ ἐλευθεροῦσθαι (S. Ignatius, *ad Polyc.*, 2) On the Christian cemeteries of Rome, see the fine work of M. de Rossi, *Roma sotterranea*.

[1] After a painting of the close of the third century or commencement of the fourth, in the cemetery of Peter and Marcellinus on the *Via Labicana*. (Th. Roller, *op. cit.*, pl. liii. fig. 1.)

Crypt of Pope S. Cornelius, in the Cemetery of Callistus (Second Century).
(Roller, *ibid.*, pl. xxx. 1.)

in thousands of places the Roman usage of keeping the women separate from the men.[1]

The societies which were so numerous in the provinces had preserved the Græco-Roman notion of popular power, which the

Basilica of S. Laurence without the Walls, at Rome.

Empire had abandoned in fact if not in law—everything was done in them by voting. The Church followed this usage, which was in the apostolic tradition,[2] and this popular election was termed the voice of God, *vox Dei*.[3] Alexander Severus was so struck by

[1] In the upper galleries of the basilicas the men were on one side, the women on the other. (Pliny, *Epist.*, vi. 33.)

[2] When the apostles founded the first ecclesiastical office, the diaconate, S. Peter said to those present (*Acts*, vi. 3): "Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men . . ." See in vol. viii. of the *Histoire ecclésiastique* of Fleury, the *Discours sur l'histoire des six premiers siècles de l'Église*, §§ v. and vi.

[3] *Συνευδοκησάσης ἐκκλησίας πάσης* (S. Clement, *ad Cor.*, 44). *Ψήφῳ τοῦ λαοῦ παντός* (S. Gregory Nazianzen, *Orat.*, 24). See the election of Fabian at Rome, under Gordian (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, vi. 29), and that of Cyprian at Carthage. Yet at the end of the second century the election was modified and the powers of the bishop were extended. When the priest Novatus appointed a deacon, S. Cyprian, his bishop, accused him of usurpation (*Ep.*, 52). As in the

the advantages of this system that he for a moment thought of establishing it for the imperial administration.[1] In the civil order the election ended all, at least unless the law recognized the right of the prince to approve or reject; in the Church another act intervened, the laying-on of hands, which transmitted to the elect spiritual powers.[2] This rite, indispensable in order that the election should have its religious effect, must have from the time of its inception reduced the vote of the believers to a simple adherence given by them to the choice which the elders had prepared and which they recommended.

Another essential difference: the elections in the civil society were annual; those of the Church conferred by the episcopal consecration a permanent character. Thus this democratic society took upon itself an aristocracy which changed its members very slowly; the conservative element was placed above the varying element, and the Church had the chief advantage of hereditary governments, duration, without possessing its inconveniencies: one great bishop might be replaced by another greater than he. But this aristocracy did not enjoy a power without control. As the duumvir was, in a certain measure, dependent on the curia, the bishop administered with the council of the priests,[3] and these assisted him in deciding the questions which the members submitted to him.[4]

All associations which are formed outside of public duties and against them are compelled to constitute themselves judges of their own members. The membership of the Church, those who

pagan clergy, certain corporeal defects excluded from the priesthood. See, in Socrates (*Hist. eccl.*, iv. 23), the story of the monk Ammon who cuts off one ear to escape the episcopate.

[1] Lamp., *Alex. Sev.*, 49.

[2] *Acts*, xiv. 22: *χειροτονήσαντές τε αὐτοῖς κατ' ἐκκλησίαν πρεσβυτέρους*, and *ibid.*, vi. 6; viii. 17; ix. 17. The imposition of hands was an old Jewish usage.

[3] . . . . *et antequam diaboli instinctu studia in religione fierent . . . . communi presbyterorum consilio ecclesiæ gubernabantur. Postquam vero unusquisque eos quos baptizaverat suos putabat esse, non Christi, in toto orbe decretum est ut unus de presbyteris electus superponeretur ceteris, ad quem omnis ecclesiæ cura pertineret et schismatum semina tollerentur.* (S. Jerome, *ad Tit.*, c. 1, p. 694, ed. of 1737, and *Ep.*, 85, or 101 in the edition of the Benedictines, vol. iv. p. 803.) He there describes the ancient state of the Church at Alexandria: . . . . *Alexandriæ, a Marco evangelista usque ad Heraclem et Dionysium episcopos, presbyteri semper unum ex se electum in excelsiori gradu collocatum episcopum nominabant, quomodo si exercitus imperatorem faciat.* These words are confirmed by the patriarch Eutychius, *Ann.*, vol. i. p. 330.

[4] *Constitut. Apost.*, ii. 46.

designated the officers of the churches and received the confession of the penitent, also decided who should be saints, without all the formalities required in following centuries for canonization. The veneration with which it surrounded the tomb where reposed the remains of its heroes was afterwards sufficient to obtain admission to the register of martyrs.[1]

Between the primitive churches there was an interchange of counsels, and sometimes "a mutual and salutary admonition."[2] If they had not gone further, we should have had a number of Christian communities, which would not have composed a Church, just as a multitude of republics do not make a State. But with the dogma of the revealed law and of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, transmitted "by the laying on of hands," it was consequently necessary that the apostles should be considered as having communicated to their successors "the certain grace of the truth." These were accordingly held to be the depositaries of the oral tradition which granted permission to interpret and extend written tradition, that is, to preserve in the bosom of the Church a principle of development, as do those constitutions in our day which declare themselves subject to revision, or those governments in which legislative action is continually modifying the ancient order in accordance with new requirements. What our politicians call reason the Church calls the Holy Spirit; it is the same thing, with this difference, the one counsels and the other commands.

All the bishops had at that time an equal right,[3] and they were very numerous, because every community desired to have its own. This power would only have been a cause of division, had not the necessity of concerted action and mutual understanding

[1] The absence of this canonization is one of the arguments employed by Pope Benedict XIV. (*Œuvres*, vi. pp. 119–125) in refusing to Clement of Alexandria the title of saint.

[2] These are the words of S. Clement (*ad Cor.*, 56): Ἡ νουθέτησις ἣν ποιούμεθα εἰς ἀλλήλους καλή ἐστιν. These letters touch upon all kinds of subjects, and were often written in the name of the entire community, without the intervention of an elder or a bishop; as, for instance, the beautiful letter of the Christians of Lyons to their brethren in Asia Minor. (See vol. v. p. 226.)

[3] S. Cyprian, writing to Pope Stephen on the subject of the bishops of Gallia Narbonensis, says: *coepiscopi nostri* (*Ep.*, 67).; and in his letter No. 72 we read: . . . . *non legem damus, quando habeat in Ecclesiæ administratione voluntatis suæ arbitrium liberum unusquisque præpositus rationem actus sui Domino redditurus.* See also the words used by S. Cyprian when inviting the Fathers of the third Council of Carthage to vote with absolute freedom, for no one of them thinks of being an *episcopus episcoporum*, and is not inclined to impose his will on his colleagues, words which certainly were an allusion to the pretensions of Stephen.

compelled them to borrow still another institution from the Roman society. As the representatives of the cities assembled in the capital of the province, the representatives of the Christian communities came together at the most important seat of the religion; and these provincial assemblies, of which the Empire had not known how to take advantage,[1] made the fortune of the Church. When any difficulty arose, the bishops assembled, and after discussion, decided by a majority of the votes what should be believed and what should be done. Was it not written in the Gospel: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"? This meant that the decisions of the councils were inspired by the Holy Spirit.[2] The priests and deacons, admitted along with the bishops,[3] gave to these assemblies a democratic character, which is a great power for those who deliberate upon the interests of a newly-formed society.

This institution, destined to play a very important part, appeared toward the close of the second century. The record has been preserved of only two assemblies of this sort before the time of Severus, and of two others during his reign, unless we include those of the year 196, which were held at Rome, in Palestine, in Pontus, at Corinth, in Mesopotamia, etc.,[4] to fix the date of Easter, which determined the epoch of many Christian festivals and certain religious obligations. In the following generation S. Cyprian convoked sixty African bishops to decree measures to be taken against the *lapsi*, and eighty-seven to decide the question of the baptism of heretics.[5] This new and superior jurisdiction diminished the liberty of special churches, but was the only means

[1] See vol. iv. pp. 43 *et seq.*, and vol. v. p. 473.

[2] See p. 165. S. Cyprian writes to Pope Cornelius (*Ep.*, 54) on the subject of the council of 252: . . . . *placuit nobis, sancto Spiritu suggerente.* Constantine will call the decisions of the synod of Arles: *cœleste judicium*, and will add: *sacerdotum judicium ita debet haberi ac si ipse Dominus residens judicet* (Hardouin, *Collect. concil.*, vol. i. p. 268). Gregory the Great declared the authority of the first four œcumenical councils equal to that of the four Gospels.

[3] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, vii. 30.

[4] See *l'Art de vérifier les dates*, and Hefele, *Conciliengeschichte*, vol. i. pp. 69 *et seq.* It is doubtless to these synods that Tertullian alludes (*de Jejuniis*, 13). I do not of course mention what is called the Council of Jerusalem, between the years 50 and 52. The council of the province of Asia, which included a great number of bishops, differed on this point from the opinion of Rome, and this division lasted for centuries. (Fleury, *Hist. eccl.*, vol. i. p. 518.)

[5] These eighty-seven bishops belonged to proconsular Africa, Numidia, and Mauretania. This council appears to be of the year 256.

of making a general church. In the fourth century the Church will progress further in this road, which led to unity of faith and discipline; it will institute the Œcumenical Councils, which will suppress differences between the provincial councils, as they had suppressed differences between special Christian fraternities.[1]

Thus the Church had naturally, by the conditions of its historical development, reached the point where it took upon itself a constitution superior to that of pagan society, and it had found the chief elements of this in the remnant of the liberties which the Empire had left in the midst of the towns and provinces. It was a representative democracy, having a great deal of vitality on account of the participation of the people in affairs of common interest, and through its councils great power of cohesion. The authority of the episcopate, which increased in spite of local resistance,[2] will soon augment this union.

Certain sees, those of Alexandria, of Antioch, and of Rome, enjoyed a special consideration, due to the importance of the cities where they were established, and to the belief that, having been founded by the apostles, tradition had in those localities been preserved in a purer form. Eusebius, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, gives to them in the fourth century a special dignity which the Council of Nicæa confirmed. Although as yet there had not gone forth from the Roman Church either an illustrious theologian or any of those great words which provoke or terminate fiery disputes,[3] they must naturally have been led to recognize a primacy of honour in the bishop of the capital of the world, in the see, the only one in all the West, which was regarded as of apostolic origin, which was said to have been consecrated by the blood of Peter and of Paul, and in which their tombs were pointed out. S. Ignatius of Antioch, under Trajan, in his letter to the Christians of Rome, makes no allusion to the special power of their bishop, and if, from the depths of their prison, the confessors of Lyons

[1] The term Œcumenical Council signifies an assemblage of the bishops of the whole habitable earth, but for a long while the limits of the organized Church were the frontiers of the Empire.

[2] This resistance to the absorption of the Church by the bishop was doubtless the foundation of the struggles of Felicissimus against Cyprian and of Hippolytus against Callistus.

[3] The *Epistle* of S. Clement *to the Corinthians*, and the *Pastor*, said to be by Hermas, contain nothing dogmatic.

write to him recommending the union of the churches, they address the same recommendation to their brethren of Asia: words of peace, which on the eve of suffering the martyrs often sent to other Christian assemblies. Towards the end of the second century the inevitable evolution began. The transalpine churches were the first to take their places in upholding the apostolic see. S. Irenæus recognized in it a certain moral superiority,[1] while at the same time combating the opinion of the bishop of Rome in the quarrel which he maintained with the churches of the East. However, the ecclesiastical history of the first half of the third century, notably the letters of Firmilianus to S. Cyprian against Pope Stephen,[2] of the bishop of Carthage to the prelates of Numidia, and those of the bishops who vigorously blamed Pope Victor in the affair concerning Easter,[3] proves that no doctrinal pre-eminence was as yet accorded to it. Between the great sees there are gradations, but no subordination. The need of union for defence will at a later period establish a disciplinary hierarchy: the primacy of honour will change into primacy of jurisdiction, and the *Pope*[4] will have an empire more vast than that of the emperors. The centre of catholicity cannot be elsewhere than at the tomb of Christ or in the capital of the world. The destruction of

[1] . . . . *propter potiorem principalitatem* (*Adv. hær.*, iii. 3). S. Cyprian (*Epist.*, 55) also calls the see of Rome, *Ecclesia principalis*. Despite the famous passage: *ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν*, S. Peter did not enjoy any special privilege among the apostles. (*Matt.*, xvi. 18; *John*, xxi. 15–17.)

[2] Cyprian, *Epist.*, 27, 55, 71. Firmilianus was bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia; his vehement letter against Stephen touching the nullity of baptism administered by heretics or those who have relapsed into error is found *ap. Cypr. Epist.*, No. 75. He was an important personage in the Eastern Church: Origen sought refuge with him when Bishop Demetrius compelled him to leave Alexandria.

[3] *πλητικώτερον καθαπτομένων τοῦ Βίκτορος* (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, v. 24, 11). If, in the affair of the Novatians, the Pope deposes two Italians, it is as metropolitan, and after they had been condemned by a synod (*ibid.*, vi. 43).

[4] The bishops, even the clergy, bore this title. The name of pope, which is synonymous with father, was not attributed exclusively to the bishop of Rome until in the following centuries. As regards universal jurisdiction, or, as ecclesiastical writers now say, primacy of vigilance and inspection, the history of the Church in the third century does not warrant the recognition of it in the bishop of Rome, and a long time will yet pass before it is found. The emperors Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius, having desired to fix by the constitution of 380 (*Cod. Theod.*, xvi. 1, 2) the religion of their people: *cunctos populos . . . . in tali volumus religione versari*, give them as a rule of faith that of the bishops of Rome and of Alexandria, who are thus placed in the same rank. The constitution of 421 (*ibid.*, xvi. 2, 45) records that if, in *Illyricum*, any doubt shall arise concerning the ancient canons, it shall be referred to the bishop of the city of Constantinople, *quæ veteris Romæ prærogativa lætatur*.

The Apostles. (Vase of the Fourth Century, in the Kircher Museum.) (Roller, pl. lxxiii. 3.)

Jerusalem by Titus and Hadrian made the pontifical fortune of Rome.

While awaiting this supreme achievement of the hierarchy, unity was established, thanks to the constant connection of the Christian fraternities among themselves. They exchanged the letters of the bishops, the canons of councils, and the churches who accepted them were by that act alone recognized as "in communion" with those who had sent them. Union appearing to be a necessity for salvation, concessions were made on points of secondary importance, so as to avoid divisions which would have rendered them exposed to perils greater than persecution; hence the changes which, imposed by circumstances, were carried into effect, were, in addition, the logical development of the primitive doctrine and discipline. Thus the Catholic Church was formed of itself, little by little, through the union of particular churches. About the middle of the third century a man of authority and of government, S. Cyprian, will present the formulary of this union in a treatise on the *Unity of the Church*, in which he will assert that the Christian societies ought to remain in communion among themselves and with the apostolic see, which is the centre of catholicity.

"The primacy," he says, "was given to Peter to show that there is but one Church, but the apostles were what Peter was. The episcopate is one, and all the bishops are pastors; they have but one flock. The Church likewise is one, and it is diffused by its fruitfulness into several persons." The chair of Rome then is in his eyes the sign and not the rule of the unity, which was to him the result of the common concurrence of all the members. The needs, and the ideas to which these needs gave rise, did not at that time require a greater concentration of spiritual authority.

Of all these new things, the most important in its historical consequences was the formation of a class of men not before in existence, except perhaps in the interior of the Hindostanee peninsula. By the celibacy which came to be imposed upon him, the Christian priest will become a new being in creation, as, by spiritual consecration, which neither civil authority nor popular election could give, he becomes a man apart in society. But the renunciation of the conditions of human nature will acquire for him a special force, which was added to the religious power

that assured to him the right to remit sins and to bring down God upon the earth in the sacrifice of the altar. These priests will most frequently be good men, of an angelic purity, and with a devotion equal to any sacrifice; but sometimes also they will be men of pride such as to set their feet on the necks of kings. Hence they will become formidable to civil society, because, being placed outside of it, they will constitute a great sacerdotal body, which will desire, and, by virtue of its doctrines, will be compelled to seek by every means to prevail over society.

There was then about to be introduced into the Western world a condition that was the opposite of what Rome had known and practised for ten centuries: the separation of the clergy and the laity, of the Church and the State. In the Græco-Roman world the union of the believer with the divinity was directly realized: the father of the family was the priest of its gods. The Christian will need an intermediate to enter into communion with his. This produces a diminution of the individual dignity of the believer, while the authority of the body exclusively devoted to religious service is singularly increased by it. Bound to the priestly office for their entire existence, by their faith and by their interests, since they live by the altar,[1] these men consecrated their activity, their genius, their holiness, and sometimes their blood, to the aggrandisement of the Church. And as it is in the nature of every corporate body to work unremittingly to extend its influence and its privileges, the establishment of the clergy, such as it has been now described, assured to the Church a formidable army, which at the outset prevented it from perishing and afterwards rendered it victorious. Never did prætorian guard, in the best sense of the word, render to his prince so great service as the Church has received from the sacerdotal corps. The repository of religious doctrine and of moral truth, it has defended the one according to the times, with the spirit of gentleness, of sacrifice, or of unpitying hardness; but it has preserved the other in the darkest days of history, and still teaches it.

Thus the Church developed harmoniously its two-fold life,

[1] A Christian community of Rome, which, in the time of Pope Zephyrinus and the emperor Severus, wished to have its especial bishop, assured him 150 denarii per month. (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, v. 29.)

doctrinal and disciplinary. One thing alone diminished in it: the virtue of the miracle. In proportion as it had been extended to a greater number, it had lost that power which, to be admitted, has need of remoteness in time and space. The faith of the simple had filled with marvellous deeds the history of the early days. S. Irenæus still believed "that the genuine disciples of Christ could deliver those possessed, foretell the future, heal the

Resurrection of the Daughter of Jairus.[1]

sick and raise the dead."[2] The doctors of the present age no longer beheld these wonders, while still believing that they might see them, and Origen bears witness to the impairing of the divine gift when he only dares to speak of "the vestiges of them which exist among the Christians." Let a half century pass, and we shall hear the bishop of Cæsarea acknowledge sadly that these very vestiges have disappeared.[3]

[1] From a mutilated sarcophagus. Four different scenes follow in succession on this bas-relief. 1st, on the left, Moses striking the rock; 2nd, adoration of Christ by four persons, among whom two are weeping and veiling their faces; 3rd, the resurrection of the daughter of the chief of the synagogue of Capernaum; 4th, Christ standing with his right hand raised. This latter part is incomplete. (E. Le Blant, *Étude sur les sarcophages chrétiens antiques de la ville d'Arles*, pl. xvii. and p. 28.)

[2] Tertullian (*de Spect.*, 29) recognized also in Christians the power to drive out demons, to perform miraculous cures, and to receive divine revelations. But when the interlocutor of S. Theophilus of Antioch demands for his conversion that the bishop should show him a dead person raised to life, Theophilus replies to him (*ad Autolycum*, i. 8): "Do as the labourer who sows before he harvests, as the voyager and the sick who believe, the one in the pilot before arriving in port, the other in the physician before recovering his health;" and he is indeed right: belief in miracles requires a special disposition of mind; a man believes in them, not because he sees them, but because he thinks he sees them. This is the very expression of the bishop: "It is necessary to believe in order to see."

[3] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, i. 2; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, v. 7.

In contrast with the strong organization of the Church should be placed the weakness of the imperial clergy. The bishops, chiefs of Christian communities, are judges for heaven, judges also for earth, for the brethren acquire the habit of submitting to them the differences which arise between them. The pagan priests, mere masters of ceremonies in the religious solemnities, had neither vast domains and appropriate revenues, as the Church will possess when it, in its turn, will have to combat innovators, nor jurisdiction which might give them subjects, nor public teaching which would assure them believers; and paternal authority, by closing to them the interior of the family, kept the women and children out of their influence. The old clergy was therefore incapable of contending with the new. The attack was admirably, the defence very poorly, conducted. Shouts of the populace and sentences to death, that is, acts of violence, are not sufficient to hinder the expansion of a religion which, born of the spirit, could have been arrested or restrained only by the spirit.

V.—The Heresies.

Armed with its canonical books and its ardent faith, sustained by its hierarchy, and fortified by its discipline, the Church marched on slowly but surely to the conquest of the world. To the anarchy of doctrines it opposed the simplicity of its dogma; to the freedom of philosophy, the unity of its spirit; and it cast out of its fold those who, in the common *Credo*, sought "to make their selection."[1]

The narratives of the Gospels and the doctrinal exhortations of the Epistles had sufficed for the simple men whom the Church recruited in the first century. But when, in the second, the faith reached cultivated minds, these desired to co-ordinate their beliefs and solve by the processes of the schools the questions which they involved. Then was produced, in the solutions of religious problems, the same diversity that we have elsewhere seen in philosophical solutions. Many said, like the Clement of the Christian romance of the *Recognitions:* "I am sick in soul," and

[1] Heretic signifies in Greek, the one who chooses.

sought by the most diverse ways a remedy for these sufferings of the spirit, which are the most agonizing.

The Christian sects indeed drew their inspiration from the same book, but this book admitted of a thousand different interpretations, and the prophecy of Simeon was fulfilled: "Behold, this child is set . . . . for a sign which is spoken against."[1] Even after the Council of Nicæa S. John Chrysostom will say: "The mysteries of Scripture are like the pearls which fishermen go and search for in the depths of the sea. It is difficult to penetrate its meaning, still more difficult for all to comprehend it in the same manner."[2] Infinite was, accordingly, the number of solutions proposed, and each found ready to accept it some of those men whom S. James describes carried about with every wind of doctrine. There were few great Christian communities whose bishop was not obliged to refuse the kiss of peace to men who presumed to discuss their faith.

The author of the *Philosophumena* enumerates thirty-two heresies.[3] "Under the fire of persecution they swarmed," says Tertullian, "like scorpions on the banks of the Nile under the burning rays of the summer sun." We must leave to writers of religious history the study of these subtle discussions and of these bold and rash writers who have expended in behalf of humanity so much intelligence and time in vainly sounding the unfathomable. It will be sufficient for us to say that two principal categories of these undisciplined believers have been made, in which one passes by insensible shades from almost complete orthodoxy to absolute contradiction of a fundamental dogma: the heretics of *interpretation*, who changed the meaning or the text of the Scriptures, and the heretics of *inspiration*, who preached another law. Even in the time of the apostles, Cerinthus had regarded Jesus as a man; a little later, Ebion—or at least the Ebionites—had held him to have been born of Joseph and Mary, granting that he had by his virtue merited the descending of the Holy Spirit upon him. Those tenacious doctrines, found in the second century in the singular

[1] S. Luke, ii. 34: *Ecce positus est . . . . in signum cui contradicetur.*

[2] *Hom.* xiv., on the second chapter of Genesis.

[3] In the fourth century S. Epiphanius will reckon sixty, and Themistius say that the Greeks have three hundred different opinions on the divinity. (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.*, iv. 32.)

book of the *Recognitions* and in the *Pastor* of Hermas, had just been renewed by Artemon and Theodotus of Byzantium. A bishop of Antioch, Pauk of Samosata, will soon take them up again, and they will culminate in the great heresy of Arius. Now, to deny the divinity of Christ, or, like the Docetæ, to reject his humanity, was to undermine the foundation of the new religious edifice. Again, it was shaken, if, with Praxeas and Sabellius, the Son was confounded with the Father; but to assume, as Montanus did, the character of prophet, was to change its ordinances and expose it to all the tempests raised by the zealous mystics. With one party, no more religion, since the great mystery of God made man disappeared; with the other, no more organization, that is, no more force constantly acting in the same direction, since the spirit "bloweth where it listeth," consequently, no more doctrinal unity, no more Church universal.

This latter variety of heresy was especially formidable, because among the Christians it was constantly held that the gift of prophecy, while it had become enfeebled, had not ceased in the Church.

It had been said to the apostles: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter. . . . . But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, ... shall teach you all things." The newly-enlightened drew authority from these words, and many believed with Tertullian that Montanus received the inspiration promised by Jesus. But this belief in special revelations, which destroyed the gospel revelation by pretending to continue it, has given and still gives rise to the most dangerous sects. Marcion, by opposing both the Old and the New Testament, had already prepared the foundation for Manichæism.

In the midst of so many doctrines the Church had made its choice with the wonderful spirit of order and government which it seems to have acquired from those who persecuted it. Although it had as yet determined only the grand outline of the temple which it was to rear, it had already, in the third century, its immovable Capitoline rock, *Capitolii immobile saxum*, against which the unceasing waves of heresy beat in vain. Irenæus had just been writing against the Gnostics; Tertullian was engaged with the Valentinians and the Marcionites, with Hermogenes, who

maintained the eternity of matter, with Praxeas, who was subverting the dogma of the Trinity. The bishop of Antioch had condemned Montanus; that of Rome, Theodotus of Byzantium, and Minucius were arguing against the pagans.[1] The Church then knew what it wanted, and its sons by listening to her believed they "rose from the profound night of error into the full light of wisdom and truth,"[2] while the others, the philosophers, or "those who selected their part," acted at random. Finally, it already possessed what paganism never had, a mighty force of discipline. By all these things its victory is explained.

Along with this grandeur the Church has also its low side: in some of its doctors, a spirit of pride and lack of discipline which led to lamentable falls;[3] among the members, vices which are too strongly planted in our nature to be always stifled by faith,[4] or the hypocritical profession of sanctity in order to profit by the alms of the brethren; in the days of trial which are to come, numerous apostasies,[5] explained by the enlisting which was carried on among the lower classes especially,[6] in which were found so

[1] Minucius Felix was a lawyer of Rome. In his *Octavius* he essays to imitate Cicero and Plato; but, with the exception of a pleasing preamble, his pretended dialogue is but a combination of two speeches: in the one he makes accusations against the Christians, in the other he refutes them, and nowhere does he set forth the dogma. It is a plea, sometimes violent, always superficial, but written with a certain elegance of style and composed for men of letters.

[2] . . . . *discussa caligine, de tenebrarum profundo in lucem sapientiæ et veritatis emergere* (Minucius, *Oct.*, 1).

[3] Those of Tertullian, Origen, Tatian, etc. S. Justin and S. Irenæus had adopted the doctrine of the Millenarians, and Clement of Alexandria sometimes borders on heresy.

[4] Origen even goes so far as to say, "Certain churches are changed into dens of thieves." (*In Matth.*, xvi. 8, 22; xi. 9, 15.) S. Cyprian accused the priest Novatus of having suffered his father to die of hunger, caused his wife to miscarry by his brutalities, and committed, after his elevation to the priesthood, numerous acts of fraud and rapine (*Ep.*, 49), accusations which may have been false, but which show that the Church of Carthage was as much disturbed as that of Rome. Cf. Tertullian, *ad Nat.*, i. 5. In the *de Jejun.*, 17, he also admits that there were many sources of danger in the agapæ, the abuses of which S. Paul had already noticed (1 *Cor.*, xi. 21–2), and which are recalled by S. John Chrysostom (*Hom.* 27 in 1 *Cor.*, xi.) and S. Augustine (*Ep.*, 64). See, in the 35th canon of the Council of Elvira (about A.D. 300) the measures taken against the disorders of the Christian meetings at night.

[5] On the apostasies, see Le Blant, *Mémoire sur la préparation au martyre*, in the *Mém. de l'Acad. des inscr.*, vol. xxviii. pp. 54–5, the *de Lapsis* of S. Cyprian, and his letter No. 30.

[6] . . . . *de ultima fœce collectis imperitioribus.* It is the pagan of the *Octavius* who speaks thus (§ 8), and Celsus (i. 27 and iii. 44) had already said: "They know how to win only the silly, vile, and dull souls, slaves, women, and children." Further on, at § 12, Cæcilius repeats: *Ecce pars vestrum et major et melior, ut dicitis, egetis, algetis, ope, re, fame laboratis*, and, in his reply (§ 31), Octavius contents himself with saying: "We are not the dregs of the people, because we refuse your honours and your purple." Then he adds, § 36: *quod plerique pauperes*

many men "lions in peace, timid deer in time of conflict;"[1] and finally, in the very bosom of the clergy, rivalries and quarrels which led to schism or heresy.[2] Born the same day, faith and heresy were two sisters, hostile and inseparable: the one followed the other, and will follow it to eternity.

There was a third and impure one, theurgy, which insinuated itself among Christians of all sects, as among pagans of every cultus, and even among the philosophers. Miracles were everywhere demanded, and there was no lack of persons who pretended to perform them. In the condition of minds at that time nervous diseases must have been frequent, those "possessed" numerous, and healers easy to be found: convicted charlatans or deceivers, whose incantations always made dupes, and who bandied about from one sect to another the charge of working by the aid of miracles. We have seen in the preceding volume the miracles of the pagans; the *Philosophumena* show that they appeared to

dicimur, non est infamia nostra, sed gloria. The Church indeed gloried, and very justly, in seeking out the little ones: among the martyrs whom it most honoured were Blandina and two women, Felicitas and Potamienna, who suffered punishment under Severus, all three of whom were slaves. The first martyr of Africa, Namphonius, or more properly, Namphamo (see L. Renier, *Mél. d'épigr.*, pp. 277 *et seq.*), and Evelpistus, who suffered martyrdom with S. Justin, were of the same condition. Pope Callistus (218-222) had been the slave of a freedman (*Philosoph.*, ix. 12); and thus it must have been for a long period, for in the higher classes the entirely pagan education was hostile to Christianity, and the profession of Christian faith rendered it necessary to break with society and its honours. Finally, it was not merely necessary to strip "the old man" of his beliefs; it was also required to take from him his pleasures, his riches, and many, like the rich man of the Gospel, went away sorrowful, when they were reminded of the precept of Jesus on giving up their goods to the poor. But we have seen that, from the middle of the second century, the Church also attracted to itself some great minds: Aristides, Justin, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, etc., and the comparative peace which it enjoyed during the first half of the third century gained for it several conversions in great families. (Cyprian, *Epist.*, 80.)

[1] Tertullian, *de Cor.*, i.

[2] See the Epistle of S. Clement to the Corinthians, on the "impious and detestable" sedition which had broken out amongst them; the letters of S. Cyprian in respect to Novatus and Felicissima; what the angels in the vision of Satur say to bishop Optatus (*Acts of Saint Perpetua*), and the circumstances which brought about most of the schisms and heresies. Thus S. Jerome (*de Vir. illustr.*, 53) affirms that it was the jealousy and ill-conduct, *invidia et contumeliæ*, of the clergy of Rome which caused the fall of Tertullian. He shows "Rome convoking its senate against Origen because the furious dogs who were barking at him could not endure the brilliancy of his speech and his knowledge." (Rufinus, *Apol. adv. Hieron.*, ii. 20. Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, vi. 8.) By these "furious dogs" S. Jerome meant the bishops of Egypt who had cut off the great doctor from their communion. Origen himself applied to them the severe words of Jeremiah (ix. 2) concerning the guides of the people who were so skilled in doing evil. (Fragment of a letter quoted by S. Jerome, *adv. Ruf.*) This evil dated far back. S. Paul had to reprimand the Christians of Corinth and of Crete; S. James, those who exaggerated the Pauline doctrine; S. John, the Nicolaitans.

continue, but that those of the Gnostics were in competition with them; at the close of the relation of the practices of these thaumaturgists the author adds: "That is the way to deceive the simple-minded."[1] By this account the whole world, pagans and Christians, might have merited the harsh epithet, for faith in the supernatural existed everywhere, and in the Church more than anywhere else. So, without seeking it, without wishing it, it nourished in its bosom "doers of marvellous works,"[2] and among these inspired persons the women were not the least numerous.

Christianity has always had a special tenderness for women:

Bas-relief of a Christian Sarcophagus representing Miracles: Daniel and the Lions; Jesus changing the Water into Wine and raising Lazarus. In the centre, a Christian in the attitude of prayer. (Marble of the Cemetery of Callistus. Roller, *op. cit.*, pl. xlvii. fig. 2.)

this is just, for they have been and still are its most potent auxiliaries. Their lively imagination, their delicate nature, so virginal still in the wife and mother, were captivated by that belief which enjoined charity and love; which even, by the legend of Mary Magdalene, the repentant sinner, went so far as favour and pardon for those who had loved much.

It was to them that these men addressed themselves who gained admission into houses, "silent before the husband, inexhaustible in talk with the matron."[3] Celsus and the pagan of the *Octavius* indicate what part they afterwards bore in the propagation of Christianity. The mother having been won over led in the

[1] *Philos.*, iv. 4, 15: πείθει τοὺς ἀφρονας.

[2] The signification of the word thaumaturgist (*θαύματα* and *ῥέζειν*, from the root *ἐργ*).

[3] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, iii. 55.

child, then the father and the entire household. The story of S. Monica converting her husband and her son is very old and ever new. Hence the Church assured them an honoured place. The *Epistles* speak of holy women filling an office in the communities, a testimony which Pliny confirms;[1] and Lucian shows them carrying into prisons food for Christian captives. If the teaching and fulfilling of the rites was forbidden them, Jesus had given to them the good part. When Martha is indignant at being excluded from the priesthood, Mary replies to her with a smile: "Did he not tell us that our weakness would be saved by his might?"[2] This divine power which raises them so high is love.

But love is a matter of sentiment much more than of reason. When it enters into a heart under control it provokes a reasonable devotion to good works, otherwise it is disorder. By their nervous constitution, women are predisposed to excitement; some gave way to it, and these had visions or prophesied.

In the ecstasy into which they lapsed after long fastings and macerations, they saw heaven opened and conversed with angels. Tertullian has preserved to us one of these cases of psychological pathology: "One of our sisters," says he, "in the ecstasy which the Spirit bestows upon her in the very midst of our assemblies, has the grace of revelations; she sees and hears holy things, reads what is in the heart and points out remedies for the sick. Let the Scriptures, a psalm, a homily be read, and immediately she has a vision. One day when I had discoursed upon the soul, she said to us, among other things: 'I have seen a corporeal soul, having a certain form and a consistency such that it might have been grasped; it was shining, of an aerial colour, with a human countenance.'"[3] Tertullian must have been extremely delighted with a vision which confirmed his doctrine of the material nature of the soul. He had just been stating it, and the echo of the priest's words, instead of being another word, became a vision:

[1] In the *Pastor* of Hermas there is also mention of deaconesses charged with the relations of the Christian community to the widows and orphans. For Pliny, see vol. IV. p. 815.

[2] *ὅτι τὸ ἀσθενὶς διὰ τοῦ ἰσχυροῦ σωθήσεται* (Const., i. 21, *ap.* Bunsen, *op. cit.*, vol. VII.). Cf. De Pressensé, *La Vie des chrétiens*, p. 77.

[3] *De Anima*, 9.

the visionary *saw* what she had just *heard*, and there is not a day in which this miracle is not produced in certain of our hospitals.[1]

The more intense the religious life became, the more sects multiplied. From time to time the confusion penetrated into the bosom even of the greatest churches, because the effort to enhance the importance of discipline to the profit of the episcopal authority clashed with souls at the same time religious and independent. We know by the letters of S. Cyprian what disorders existed in the Christian band at Carthage. All those in revolt are naturally represented as wretches, it is the lot of the vanquished. But if we knew something more than the accusations "against the conspiring priests," if those to whom the bishop imputes so many shameful deeds had told us the motives of their conduct, perhaps we should see in the excommunicated, instead of disturbers and guilty persons, men defending the liberty of their church.

This struggle between two principles, one of which was soon to stifle the other, existed at Rome, unknown even to those who maintained it. A book recently discovered, the *Philosophumena*,[2] written by a bishop, shows irritating discussions in this church.

The slave Callistus had been ordered by his master to found a bank; he was unfortunate—the author says dishonest—and was sent to the mill, that is, to the hardest labour. The brethren interfered; he recovered his liberty and, one day, outraged the Jews in open synagogue, which caused him to be condemned by the prefect of Rome to be beaten with rods and sent to the mines of Sardinia as a disturber of public order. When Marcia, the concubine of Commodus, obtained from the bishop of Rome the names of the Christians banished to the island, in order to their release, Bishop Victor did not place Callistus on the list; but the shrewd man won over the messenger of the empress, who took it upon himself to bring him away with the others. At

[1] It is not merely the philosophers who ought to-day to study the sciences concerned with life; the historians have far more need of it, for physiology has played an important part in the world before there were physiologists, and it explains many facts inexplicable without it. It is sad to say it, but a hospital for the insane is also itself a book of history.

[2] This manuscript, discovered in 1840 and published for the first time in 1851 by M. Miller, has been attributed to Origen, to Caius, a Roman priest, to Tertullian, finally to Hippolytus, bishop of Portus Romanus at the mouth of the Tiber. This latter opinion tends to prevail. The author is an adversary of Pope Callistus, which renders it necessary, without rejecting his narrative, to make allowance for the passion which he displays in it.

Rome Callistus succeeded in getting into the good graces of Pope Zephyrinus, "a simple-minded man," says the author, "very avaricious and somewhat venal," who set him in command of the guard of the common cemetery of the Christians,[1] then in charge of the distribution of alms and of the administration of the church. In these duties, which brought him into daily contact with all the faithful, he won their confidence. The community was very much divided; he persuaded each faction that he was at heart with them, and, at the death of Zephyrinus, he was elected in his

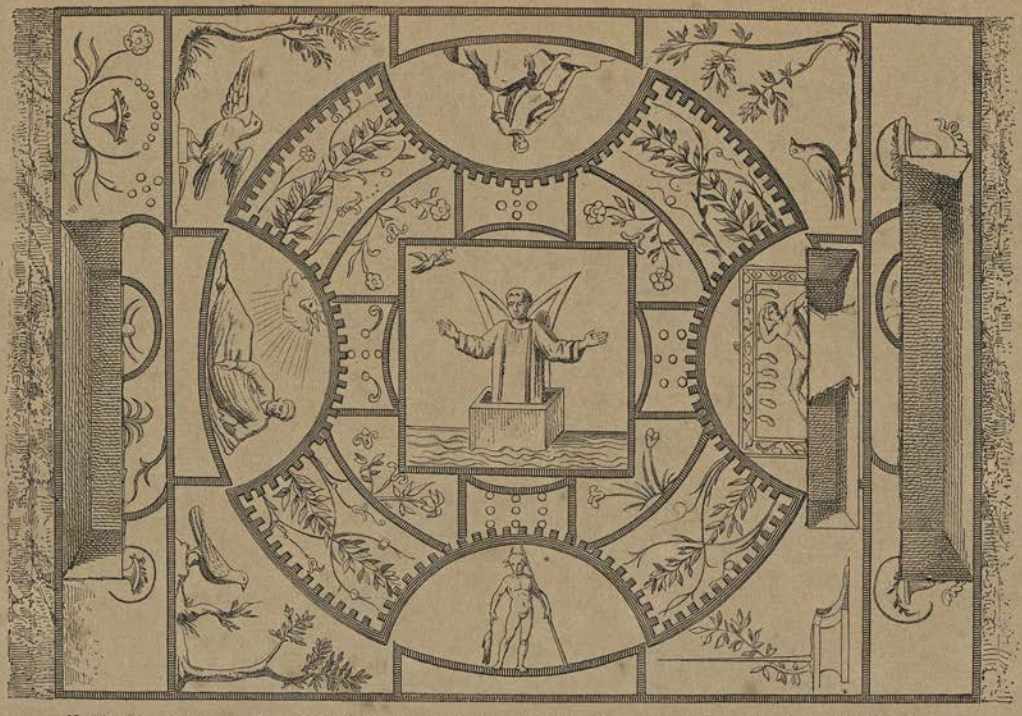
Pope Callistus (after a Gilt Glass).[2]

place, in spite of his unfavourable antecedents (A.D. 218 or 219). Immediately the disorders in discipline and the confusion in belief increased. Callistus accused several orthodox bishops of heresy, while he himself taught that the Father and the Son were one and the same person. To multiply the number of his adherents, he admitted married men to the priesthood; to the church, sinners unreconciled; to communion, men of easy morals, women living in concubinage, mothers who had exposed their infants. "Let the tares grow with the wheat," said he, "the Church has for its symbol the Ark of Noah, which contained clean and unclean animals."[3] What truth is there in these accusations?

[1] *Cœmeterium Callisti*, discovered by M. Rossi, and so well-studied by him.

[2] Roller, *op. cit.*, pl. lxxviii. No. 2.

[3] *Philosoph.*, ix. 12. The reproaches of the author are evidently exaggerated; but on the question of the troubles at Rome his testimony is confirmed by the *Pastor* of Hermas: *vos infirmati a secularibus negotiis tradidistis vos in socordiam* (*Visio*, iii. 2), and by what S. Jerome says of the conduct of the Roman clergy with regard to Tertullian. Amm. Marcellinus relates (xxvii. 3), at an epoch when discipline was far better established, that when two bishops were disputing for the see of Rome, a terrible riot broke out, after which one hundred and thirty-seven dead bodies were found in the Sicinian basilica.



Noah's Ark. Centre of a Fresco; the Ceiling of a *cubiculum* of the Cemetery of Domitilla (middle of the Third Century).
(Roller, pl. xxxv. and Bosio, p. 243.)

We do not know. The author of the *Philosophumena* evidently leans toward the Montanists and an indulgent bishop is displeasing to his austere character. But if the picture be overdrawn, even if, as has been pretended in order to get rid of a vexatious revelation, the Callistus of the *Philosophumena* is not that of the Church, it no less remains that Rome had at this epoch its revolts against the ecclesiastical chief; soon they will make an antipope, Novatian. Pope Stephen and the great bishop of Carthage will exchange angry letters,[1] and the bishop of Cæsarea will say of that of Rome: "His soul is fickle, uncertain, and cowardly."[2] At Alexandria, Demetrius, jealous of Origen, will force him to leave that city, and, later, its communion; later still, Paul of Samosata will be forced to leave the episcopal throne at Antioch under accusation of avarice, bad morals, and heresy. The Christian fraternities then were not always the seraphic church of tradition; they were communities composed of men, some of whom had great virtues, others our passions, our vices, and all the transports of feeling to which the religious spirit very easily accommodates itself in certain natures.

From the time of Marcus Aurelius, Celsus had been able to pretend that the divisions were already such among Christians that they no longer had anything in common except the name; and Ammianus Marcellinus, a pagan void of religious passion, who renders homage to the purity of the Christian faith, says in the following century: "Wild beasts are not more cruel to man than is the rage of the greater part of the Christians against the others."[3] Pious souls, on the contrary, have drawn from these persistent disorders proof that the new religion was of divine instituting, because a human work could not have survived such ruptures. We can only say that they were inevitable. Man is found again, with his passions, in the theologian as well as in the philosopher,[4] for it is not the beliefs nor the ideas which make

[1] Cyprian, *Epist.*, 75, 25, and 26: . . . . *non pudet Stephanum, Cyprianum pseudochristum et pseudoapostolum dicere.* The Novatians, a rigid sect which did not admit of reconciliation with the *lapsi*, were still numerous in the fifth century. (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.*, iv. 28.)

[2] *Id., ibid.*, 78, 25: . . . . *anima lubrica, mobilis et incerta.* The bishops of Tarsus and of Alexandria also sided with Cyprian against Stephen in this controversy.

[3] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, iii. 10 and 12, and Amm. Marcellinus, xxii. 5.

[4] This is almost what S. Paul said to the Corinthians (1 *Cor.*, i. 4), when he places in opposition in the Christian the *spiritual* man and the *carnal* man.

the violent or the peaceful, but the character, the habits which education has formed, and the institutions to which one has conformed his life.

[1] Roller, pl. xc. fig. 12. This lamp bears the cruciform monogram.

Christian Lamp of Bronze (end of Fourth Century).[1]

CHAPTER XCI.

THE PERSECUTION UNDER SEVERUS.

I.—Idea of the State among the Ancients; Opposition of the Christians.

THE imperial government was well aware of the powerful organization of the Church,[1] these communities corresponding with one another from one end of the Empire to the other; these men who, without money, traversed lands and seas, who everywhere saw, at their approach, doors and hearts thrown open; who, in short, even with men of another language, at a sign made themselves known without needing to be understood.[2] The imperial government, so fearful of secret societies, found an immense one extended everywhere, and which was an evident peril, for it was in the bosom of the State another active State; but tolerance was a necessary consequence of the religious organization of the Romans, who never had a theocracy, because in their pontiffs the civil character outbalanced the sacerdotal. The priests of Jupiter and of Mars were judges, soldiers, administrators; and they had learned, in the government of men, that the law touches only acts and has no hold on the thoughts. In the midst of the profound peace which Severus guaranteed to the Roman world, when no apprehension of public danger excited men's minds, the sages who conducted the affairs of State did not think of proscribing the new religion, while yet leaving it under the menace of Trajan's rescript. This rescript it was impossible to repeal so long as the Cæsars

[1] Ulpian, one of the councillors of Severus, had collected in the seventh chapter of his treatise *de Off. proc.* all the edicts relating to the Christians. (Lactantius, *Inst. div.*, V. ii. 13.)

[2] All ecclesiastical history testifies to the activity of these communications. The churches consult one another, communicate the decisions which they have reached, their sufferings and their triumphs. Even the writings circulated rapidly. S. Irenæus, at Lyons, borrows several passages from Theophilus of Antioch; and the author of the *Philosophumena* at Rome, Tertullian at Carthage, copy the Lyonnese bishop.

retained the religion of their fathers; for, to them, the title of sovereign pontiff was equivalent to the oath taken by our kings, the day of consecration, to preserve the orthodox religion and not to tolerate heretics within their States.[1]

This partial tolerance assured to the Church only an uncertain peace, for the best of the pagans resembled the historian Dion Cassius, a timorous spirit, the foe of all violence, who yet wanted the Christians to be punished, because, he said, innovators in religion were of necessity innovators in politics, who urged on citizens to revolt.[2] From time to time a popular outbreak made a few victims, or an over-zealous governor applied the old laws of the Empire. Severus at first manifested toward the Christians only great indifference, for he saw among them merely "carders, fullers, and shoemakers,"[3] and it did not seem to him that an emperor had anything to fear from this God of the lower classes. It is not certain that he sent any one, before the year 202, into exile or to the quarries whence Marcia, under Commodus, had withdrawn them,[4] and the Christians were without doubt included in the favour which he accorded "to the sectaries of the Jewish superstition," that of being eligible to municipal honours, with release from obligations contrary to their beliefs.[5] Some of these were to be seen among his attendants. Before attaining his grandeur, one of them had healed him of some malady; when he had become emperor, he caused search to be everywhere made for

[1] Oath of Louis XIII. at his consecration: . . . . *Outre je tascheroy à mon pouvoir, en bonne foy, de chasser de ma juridiction et terres de ma sujétion tous hérétiques dénoncés par l'Église* (*Le Cérémonial françois*, by Théod. Godefroy, 1649).

[2] Dion, lii. 36.

[3] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, iii. 55.

[4] After having enumerated those whom the Christian communities assisted, the poor, the orphans, the old servants, and the shipwrecked, Tertullian, who however has a habit of extreme exaggeration, adds: *et si qui in metallis, et si qui in insulis vel in custodiis, ex causa Dei sectæ* (*Ap.*, 39). We have seen above, p. 25, that Marcia had obtained the release of those who were in the mines of Sardinia, and there is no reason to think that the measure may not have been general.

[5] *Digest*, L. 2, 3, § 3. This interpretation may be allowable of the treatise *de Idololatria*, in which Tertullian recites what "the Christian magistrate" ought not to permit. We see also, by the *Acta martyrum*, that judges sought to substitute a political accusation for a religious one, demanding of the Christians brought before them not: "Are you Christians?" but, "Have you attended unlawful assemblies?" As for the Jews, their teaching was public. . . . . *Judæi palam lectitant, vectigalis libertas vulgo aditur sabbatis omnibus* (Tertullian, *Apol.*, 18), and the government saw to it that no one should disturb their religious service. (*Philosoph.*, ix. 12.) They received this right from Augustus. (Josephus, *Ant. Jud.*, xvi. 6, 2.)

him, and established him at the palace.[1] Others dwelt there, if the celebrated *graffito* of the crucified with the head of an ass, found lately on the Palatine, is, as is likely, of this time. Besides, do we not know that Caracalla had a Christian nurse,[2] and that one day he was so enraged because one of his playmates had been

Graffito of Christ crucified with an Ass's Head (now in the Kircher Museum).[3]

whipped for being of the Jewish or Christian religion, that he for a long time refused to see those who had beaten him?[4] When we read in the *Digest* that Severus ordered the persons accused of holding unlawful assemblies to be brought before the city prefect, we may conclude from this, since the guarantees of justice are

[1] Tertullian, *ad Scap.*, 4.

[2] *Lacte Christiano educatus* (Tertullian, *ibid.*).

[3] Christ on the cross is looking at a person below him whose arm is raised in the attitude of adoration. Lower down, the Greek legend, badly engraved, signifies: "Alexamenos adores (his) God." Evidently a bit of irony intended for a comrade in service in the palace of the Cæsars. Near this *graffito* these words have been found engraved: *Alexamenos fidelis.* Father Garucci, who published this caricature in 1857, believes it to be of the commencement of the third century, because at this epoch the pagans accused their opponents of adoring an ass's head. In 1882 a fresco was discovered at Pompeii, representing a parody of the judgment of Solomon, doubtless executed for some householder of that pleasure-loving city who wished to make sport of the Jews, his neighbours.

[4] Spart., *Caracalla*, 1.

increased in proportion to the higher rank of the judge, that the rescript must have been favourable to the Christians: the old and harsh law against associations was about to be tempered by political prudence. The same prince authorized poor people throughout the Empire to form societies with monthly assessments.[1] In fact, this rescript was favourable to the Christians, and we have no right to say that Severus did not think of them in writing it.[2]

But the emperor disliked uproar of any sort, and the religious disputes occasioned a great deal, especially when Tertullian joined in them, and he spent his life thus. This son of a centurion was a man of strife; he made attacks in his own defence and struck out all about him, hurling invectives at once at the pagans, their magistrates, their gods, "admitted to heaven by a decree of the senate," and at those of his brothers whom he treated as heretics,[3] without thinking that the orthodox were reserving the same lot for himself. In a recently discovered fragment of Clemens Romanus is found this prayer to God: "It is thou, Almighty King, who hast given the kingdom to our sovereigns that we might be in subjection to them. Grant them, O Lord, health and peace, that they may without hindrance exercise the power which thou hast confided unto them over all existence. Direct, O Lord, their will according to right and in conformity with what is agreeable unto thee, so that, using authority with mildness, they may find thee favourable . . . ."[4] This is the attitude of the primitive Christians, that of the apostles Paul and Peter, that also of a bishop of Rome at the end of the first century, and of Theophilus of Antioch in the middle of the second. How different these holy men are from the fiery doctor of Carthage writing in his treatise *de*

[1] . . . . *permittitur tenuioribus stipem menstruam . . . . non tantum in Urbe, sed et in Italia et in provinciis . . . . divus Severus rescripsit* (*Digest*, xlvii. 22, 1). He prohibited them in the armies (*ibid.*), where they were nevertheless formed. Cf. L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.*, 70.

[2] Tertullian attests (*Apol.*, 39) that this custom of furnishing the *menstruam stipem* existed among the Christians; they had, then, taken advantage of the law of Severus. Yet he says that the pretext for the persecution was the unlawful assembling (*de Jejun.*, 13). Severus, who merely proposed to check the propagation of the new religion, may only have struck a blow at the meetings which had not assumed the legal character of the burial societies.

[3] He refuses to them the *right* of discussion and treats them as condemned without appeal. In the *de Præscr. adv. hæret.*, he opposes to them only the judicial form of the ordinance: "You have in your behalf," he said to them, "neither time nor possession," and this argument sufficed for him.

[4] 1*st Clementine*, chap. xxxvii.

Idololatria a veritable declaration of war against pagan society. In another[1] we hear this repeated cry of revolt: "It is our business to contend against the institutions of the ancients, the laws of our masters;"[2] and this moral revolt was legitimate, since the imperial government, not comprehending the sacred rights of conscience, had treated godly men like criminals. As to the life of the Christians, Tertullian would have it sad and sombre, ever in sackcloth and ashes, in prayers and tears. "The woman who does not live like a repentant and mourning Eve is condemned and already dead. Her ornaments are the trappings of her burial."[3] And this severity corresponded so well to the spirit of the Church that the authority of the priest of Carthage, despite his fall, was generally recognized in it and continued to be so. "Give me the master," said S. Cyprian, when he wanted one of the books of the celebrated doctor, *da magistrum*,[4] and Bossuet, who has often copied him, often speaks like Cyprian.

Minucius Felix has neither his genius nor his rudeness, and is even more bitter. It is not enough for him to make a laughing stock of the gods of Rome; he tramples under foot the last homage that remains to her, the pride in her memories. S. Clement recognized Rome as his country; speaking of her he said: "Our legions, our generals."[5] Minucius is a Roman no longer; for him, the fortune of this people is composed of iniquities, its history filled with crimes, and its city has never been other than a den of bandits.[6] With less wrath and as much disdain, S. Augustine says of the glory of the Romans: *acceperunt mercedem suam, vani vanam.*

The sentiments of Minucius are those of the greater number of Christians. Sanctus, one of the martyrs of Lyons, is asked in the midst of tortures, his name, city, and country, whether he is free or a slave. But he has no name, he has no country. To

[1] *Adversus hæc nobis negotium est, adversus institutiones majorum, auctoritates receptorum, leges dominantium, argumentationes prudentium* (*ad Nation.*, 20).

[2] See also the violent outbursts of the *de Corona*, 11. This old spirit of the Church should be noted, as it reappeared as soon as the laity began to withdraw from it.

[3] *De Cultu fem.*, i. 1.

[4] S. Jerome, *de Vir. illustr.*

[5] This is the famous ἡμῶν so long contested and which can be so no longer.

[6] *Octavius*, 25.

everything he replies but one word: "I am a Christian!" It is very fine, but also very menacing. *Civis Romanus sum!* cried the Roman of ancient days, attesting his nobility and his right. The Stoic was still a citizen of the world. The Christians have only one city, heaven; they know no other country.

Greece and her glories, which are those of the human mind, find no favour with them. To them, Socrates is a buffoon,[1]

Scene of Persecution: the Accusation.[2]

Aristotle a wretch,[3] and they pronounce an anathema against all the great philosophers. What a difference between the apologists of the first age and those of the second, and, in the space of half a century, from Justin to Minucius Felix, from Athenagoras to Tertullian, how hatred has become envenomed! The Church, when it was mistress of the world, became a great school of respect and submission to law; it was not so then.

[1] *Octavius*, 38; *Scurra Atticus*.

[2] Fresco of the cemetery of Callistus, over the crypt of Pope Eusebius. Unique example of a judgment scene in primitive Christian iconography. (Roller, i. pl. xxvii. No. 1, and pp. 161-2.)

[3] *Miserum Aristotelem* (Tertullian, *de Præscr.*, 7). Clement of Alexandria, on the contrary, rendered at the same period a solemn act of homage to Aristotle, copying him in his *Hypotyposes*.

To these maledictions against history and philosophy, that is, against civilization, were added menaces against the Empire and its sacrilegious Babylon. The sect of Montanists, which increased in numbers daily, and even, if we may believe the pagan orator of the *Octavius*, all Christians,[1] announced at Rome its impending destruction, and their gloomy prophecies gave occasion to the belief that they would willingly hasten that ill-fated hour. "If all others thought as you do," said Celsus to them, "the world would become the prey of the barbarians,"[2] and, in fact, it did become so, when every one thought as they did. There were at this time, indeed, in Alexandria, men such as Pantænus, Clement, and Origen, who, sincere admirers of the ancient philosophy, would have desired to "disengage the pearls hidden in a pernicious alloy;"[3] or, as Origen said, "to carry off the gold of the Egyptians to make of it sacred vessels for the altar."[4] But when they spoke of their contemporaries, it was with the bitterness of Tertullian. Cyprian, one of the most moderate of them, wrote in the midst of a pestilence and famine to the proconsul Demetrianus: "If I have not replied to your barking against God, it is that I may not expose our sacred truth to the outrages of dogs and swine. . . . . These scourges are the divine vengeance which strikes the hardened sinner. What! you blaspheme against the true God, you persecute his servants, and you are astonished that the rain does not descend upon your arid plains, that the springs are dried up, that the hail destroys your crops and the poisoned air decimates your population? These misfortunes are the consequence of your iniquities!"[5] The pagans were not silenced, and all the more cried out: "The Christians to the lions!" On both sides passion conceived gods in its own image, angry and violent, while impassive nature, pursuing the course of its immutable laws, bore fruitful clouds to one locality and deadly miasma to another.

[1] *Oct.*, 10. The *Octavius* must have been written about the year 180, and the treatise of Celsus is probably of the same time.

[2] *Contra Celsum*, viii. 68. In speaking thus I merely wish to state the *fact*, that the Christians, after having been an element of dissolution to the pagan empire, did not understand how to save the Christian empire when they had become masters of it.

[3] *Strom.*, I. i. § 17.

[4] *Epist. ad Gregor.*, 1, 30.

[5] *Ad Demetrianum*, 8. In this very spirited letter against pagan society, Cyprian also announced the approaching destruction of the world.

The Romans, who had so keen a relish for tragic declamations, and the emperor who had himself made them, would not perhaps have paid much attention to the sombre pictures which many Christians unrolled before their gaze, if the new doctrine had not, in other directions, appeared dangerous to them.

S. Paul had said: "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God."[1] And some years later Clemens Romanus had drawn up for the churches a prayer in which he besought God to give to the emperors health, strength, and security.[2] But the spirit of submission was already that of only a part of the believers. Severus was a soldier. What was he to think of men who, when Celsus reproached them for abandoning the Empire when assailed by the barbarians, replied: "It is true that we do not bear arms, and that we would not, though the emperor wished to compel us; we have another camp where we combat for him by our prayers."[3] Being a jurist, how could he regard a sect in which it was taught that when the law of the Church is in opposition to the law of the State, it is the former which must be obeyed,[4] "because faith does not admit the allegation of necessity."[5] A prince, in short, and the necessary conservator of an order of things which had always exacted devotion to social obligations, it was inevitable that he should seek to stay the progress of a religion whose sectaries lost their interest in public duties.

According to the ideas of the ancients, whether the State was represented by a man, a senate, or a popular assembly, in a famous city like Athens or Rome, or in the most obscure municipality, the citizen owed to it all his faculties, his valour in battles, his fortune in public necessities, his life in great perils. This dependence with regard to the State, much the opposite of our ideas of individual liberty, had given to patriotism an energy which ours has lost; and this is why we do not comprehend, or comprehend imperfectly, so

[1] *Romans*, xiii. 1.

[2] *II. Clem., ad Cor.*, 59–72. Ed. Hilgenfeld.

[3] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, viii. 73–74. And the facts accord with the words. The recruiting officer presents to the proconsul of Africa a young man delivered over to be a soldier; but the young man replies that, being a Christian, he is not permitted to bear arms. For this refusal of the military oath he was executed. (Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 299, *ad ann.* 295 or 296.)

[4] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, v. 37.

[5] *Non admittit status fidei allegationem necessitatis* (Tertullian, *de Cor.*, ii.).

many things in ancient society. Thus, to make out, in the persecutions, the part of each, executioners and victims, we must take into account the horror which these men inspired, who set up in opposition to their common country, bequeathed to them by their ancestors, another which they had themselves invented. "Why," they were asked, "why do you shun municipal office where the law is protected?" "Because, in each one of your cities, we have another country which God has made for us, and it is to the government of this that those of us who have authority by word or moral character should be attached."[1] Several systems of philosophy, even that which then prevailed, also recommended separation from the world; but, in the schools, this spirit was inoffensive, because it remained a matter of mere psychological curiosity.

Many other things still further scandalized the pagans. Then, as to-day, large families were honoured, and the Roman law punished celibacy. Now the Gnostic Christians, almost as numerous as the orthodox, cursed the flesh as the principle of all evil and practised celibate asceticism. Others, regardless even of the conditions of human life, placed among their pious books treatises "on the inconveniences of marriage."[2] Some dared to think that Adam would have done far better to have remained in a state of virgin purity, and God to have found another means of placing upon the earth the adorers of his power.[3] One of them went so far as to

[1] *Scimus, in singulis civitatibus, aliam esse patriam a verbo Dei constitutam, eos ut Ecclesiam regant hortamur qui potentes sermone et quorum mores sani sunt* (Origen, *Contra Celsum*, viii. 75). "To-day even, in every country, we would prosecute any association propagating certain ideas promulgated by Tertullian in chapter lxxxi. of the *de Corona*, 22" (De la Berge, *Trajan*, p. 213).

[2] This was one of the first works of Tertullian, and S. Jerome recommended the reading of it to Eustochia (*ad Jovinian.*, i. and *Epist.*, 18, *ad Eustoch.*). Tertullian, however, did not himself profit by it, for he married, and in the second of his letters to his wife (*ad Uxorem*, ii. 9) he draws a very beautiful picture of Christian marriage. But, in the first, he represents marriage to be unsuitable for believers, and makes a vow of continence. The Marcionites forbade conjugal union; Tatian condemned it; the Valentinians, Basilians, Encratites or *Continents* did the same; Origen rendered himself incapable of it, and his imitators were still numerous enough in the fourth century to require that the first canon of the Council of Nicæa should prohibit the mutilation. Other Gnostic sects destroyed marriage by community of wives. Clement of Alexandria, a contemporary of Tertullian, but a genius of milder character, combats, in book iii. of the *Stromata*, all these excesses, and exalts anew the sanctity of the married state. His doctrine has remained that of the Church; but the Montanist spirit, which is not dead, has covered the world with convents.

[3] We find traces of these singular opinions in Justin, Gregory of Nyssa, and S. Augustine; Macarius Magnes maintained that Adam made no use of marriage until after his sin.

write: "When we have children, we desire that they may go before us into the presence of the Lord." Tertullian, it is true, who spoke thus, says of himself: "I do not dispute, I do not go to war, and my sole care is to exempt myself from all care."[1] One might, on the contrary, accept this thought of Montanus: "Man is a lyre which the Spirit of God strikes,"[2] if it did not expose us to another peril by the annihilation of our will and

A Woman at Prayer and the Good Shepherd. (Painting of the Cemetery of SS. Nereus and Achilleus. Roller, pl. xlix. fig. 1.)

absolute abandonment to Providence, that is, to the hazard of individual inspirations taken for revelations from on high.

The eloquent and sombre declamations of Tertullian were not the rule of faith of all the believers. There were certainly Christians in the army, in municipal offices, in civil functions,[3] and all did not renounce their property through apprehension of the fate of Ananias, or give up commerce and industrial pursuits for fear of infringing upon the prescribed rules of the Church

[1] Tertullian, *de Pallio*, 5.

[2] S. Epiphanius, *Adv. hær.*, 48.

[3] They were there, but in very small number. The famous words of Tertullian, "We fill the cities, the camps, the senate" (*Apol.*, 37), are contradicted by all the facts and testimonies. (See vol. v. p. 741.) The number of bishops found in certain countries should not mislead us in regard to the number of the faithful. "Wherever three Christians are united," says Tertullian (*Exhort. castit.*, 7), "there is a church," and the *Constitutions of the Church of Alexandria*, i. 13 (*ap.* Bunsen, *op. cit.*), require that when the members are few in number, *ἐὰν ὀλιγανδρία ὑπάρχει καὶ μήπου πλῆθος τυγχάνει τῶν ἐναμένων ψηφίσασθαι περὶ ἐπισκόπου . . .*, they should seek the attendance of three judicious men sent by the neighbouring churches.

with regard to lending money at interest.[1] Some were found, who, penetrated with the sweetness of the Gospels, forgot the God of inexorable vengeance, and saw only the Good Shepherd bringing back upon his shoulders the sheep which had gone astray. Those were the neophytes who remembered having been fed by the Church with milk and honey "at their entrance into the land of promise;" they took delight in life, in the sunlight and the flowers, in friendship and love, as in gifts of their Heavenly Father; and they were the most numerous, because they obeyed

The Good Shepherd and the Twelve Apostles.[2]

the true laws of our nature, against which no general revolt is possible. But they were not the most zealous. Those upon whom had been poured out the wine of wrath and the intoxication of death, cried out, with Minucius Felix: "It is no longer a time to adore crosses, but to bear them;"[3] and they are the martyrs of the persecution which we are about to narrate.

II.—Rescripts of Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, and Severus.

Sophocles, in his *Antigone*, had already shown in magnificent terms the opposition which may be found between civil law and natural law, "between the decrees of men and those ever-living laws which no hand has written, but which the gods have engraved on the hearts of all." The pious young girl who braves "the lordly menaces of a tyrant, so as not to incur the wrath of the

[1] Lending at interest was considered usury and condemned under that title.

[2] Bas-relief found near the church of S. Lorenzo fuori Mura. (Bosio, p. 411, and Roller, pl. xliii. fig. 2.) The Good Shepherd is represented, in the centre and at the two extremities of the bas-relief, taking care of "his sheep."

[3] *Octavius*, 12: *jam non adorandæ, sed subeundæ cruces.*

immortals," already speaks as the martyrs are going to speak; and we are with the poet when he nobly reclaims the rights of conscience. But if the inspired psalmists are sometimes prophets of the future, the prince is always the man of the present, and it is his duty to compel obedience to the law which his predecessors have bequeathed to him, and the execution of which is demanded of him by society.

Tertullian claims from Severus religious liberty: "It is human right," he says, "*jus humanum*, that each one may worship whom he pleases, and it is contrary to religion to constrain to religion."[1] Beautiful words, pronounced by the suffering Church, which the victorious Church will repudiate, and which certain sects of modern times still reject, saying to their opponents: "We claim liberty in the name of your principle; we refuse it to you by virtue of ours."

Origen also is indignant that the Church should be absorbed by the State, and he is right, for the spiritual tribunal ought to be shielded from all constraint; but some day, the Papacy, with as little wisdom as the Empire, will seek by an opposite excess to place the State within the Church.

Minucius Felix in his *Octavius*, the priest of Carthage in his *Apology*, and with them all the defenders of the new faith, plead the innocence of the Christians; they are thoroughly right. But none of them understand that fatality of history which wills, in religion as in political affairs, that what exists should seek to defend itself, and that an old society should repel those who pretend to change its morals, its ideas, and its institutions. To the Romans, conservators of the ancient social order, the Christians were dangerous revolutionists; in their acts of piety they beheld sacrilege; in their faith, the ruin of the official worship and of the political organization of which this worship was an essential element.[2] Hence the argument of Tertullian demanding that the ordinary rules of justice should be applied to the Christians falls through, in spite of the eloquence which supports it. "All crimes," says he, "are imputed to them, but they are interrogated

[1] *Ad Scapul.*, 2: *Non religionis est cogere religionem.*

[2] . . . . *Sacrilegii et majestatis rei convenimur* (Tertullian, *Apol.*, 10). He recognizes further on that the emperors could not be at the same time *et Christiani et Cæsares* (*ibid.*, 21).

only on this topic: 'Are you a Christian?' 'Yes.' That is the whole examination."[1] And while torture is employed to compel ordinary culprits to confess their crime, with the Christian it is made use of to obtain of him his permission, by abjuring his faith, that the judge may declare him innocent. Does he persist? a more complete investigation is not necessary. The usual accusations: adoration of an ass's head, murders of children, the flesh of whom was eaten, incestuous orgies in the shades of night, all that is good for the populace; the judge does not consider it. In Christianity he sees only mystic reveries and socialistic doctrines; in the Christian only a public enemy, with whom it is enough to establish his identity before throwing him to the beasts. The Catholic inquisition will not require any more to send one of the Albigenses or Protestants to the stake.[2]

These persecutions, which excite our horror, appeared to people of that time merely questions of public order. Against the Christians Rome did what modern governments do against those who attack their essential principle, but it did so with the processes of a time when penal legislation was lavish of death.[3] This is why extenuating circumstances should be admitted in favour of those who ordered them, while reserving a vigorous condemnation against the ideas and institutions which rendered these iniquities possible. There is another duty to fulfil, and this is, to distinguish among the persecutors those who yielded with regret and in a slight measure to the passions of the times, and those who, sharing them, mingled cruelty instead of indulgence with the execution of detestable laws. Severus should be placed among the first, for

[1] *Confessio nominis non examinatio criminis* (*ibid., Apol.*, 2).

[2] By the declaration of July 1st, 1686, Louis XIV. pronounced the penalty of death against those who should be found performing religious services other than Catholic. (Isambert, *Coll. des anc. lois franç.*, vol. xx. p. 5.) Down to Louis XVI. Protestants were deprived of civil status, and in our century there have been cases of *auto-da-fé* in Spain. As to sorcerers, unhappy fools whom the Church considered as imps of Satan, they were burned by thousands. In a corner of Franche-Comté there were, from 1606 to 1636, one hundred executions and sixty banishments for deeds of sorcery. (*Hist. de Jussey*, by l'Abbé Coudriet, p. 379.) Under Louis XV. witches were also burnt (Maury, *Magie et astrol.*, p. 222); and only a few years since some peasants threw into a furnace an old woman whom they believed to be a witch. [On this question, see the interesting chapter in Lecky's *Hist. of Rationalism.*—*Ed.*]

[3] This harshness of penal laws lasted very long. In the eighteenth century they contented themselves with burning the books, but in the Middle Ages they burned those who wrote them. Richelieu, even, had a poor poet hung who had committed the crime of some bad verses against the government.

though he was less wise than Hadrian he was more so than Diocletian.

Trajan had made a State crime of the *public manifestation* of Christian faith;[1] but he had interdicted the seeking for this; under Marcus Aurelius we find a decree stating: "He who by superstitious practices shall affright the inconstant soul of men shall be banished to an island."[2] This rescript did not designate the Christians by name, but they were certainly included among those whom it was to affect. It was one step further towards persecution. In 202 Severus took a third. On the banks of the Nile he had placed under lock and key the books of Egyptian theology, and while crossing Palestine he had promulgated an edict which prohibited Christian and Jewish propagandism.

In all antiquity religion and the State had been so closely united that a Roman could not comprehend the one without the other. It had been the same at Jerusalem; hence Rome had officially permitted the religion of the Jews, by recognizing, in the treaties made with them, their nationality. It was easy then to apply to them the rescript of Severus and to hold them confined to their race, the more so as they but seldom sought to escape from it. But the Christians formed a sect and not a nation; they were recruited from all parts, even among the barbarians. To enter into communication with the enemies of the Empire was already a very grave matter; but to induce citizens to abandon the national religion seemed treason, and the government would have desired to stop the desertion of these fugitives from the Roman fatherland.

The edict, however, did not go so far as to proscribe the existing Christian communities; it only tended to prevent the extension

[1] See vol. iv. p. 816. Tertullian (*Apol.*, 2) marks very correctly the character of this rescript: . . . . *inquirendos quidem non esse, oblatos vero puniri oportet*, and one fact, placed by Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.*, v. 21) under the reign of Commodus, shows this jurisprudence in action. "Apollonius, who was of the number of the faithful, was accused by a minister of Satan at a time when that was not permitted. Perennis commanded the informer to be executed; but he referred Apollonius, in his turn, to the senate, and the latter, having refused to renounce his faith, had his head cut off, because it was forbidden by the law to absolve Christians who had been accused, unless they changed their opinions." Thus the prefect of the prætorium punished with death an accuser of the Christians, which must have intimidated those who might have been tempted to follow his example. But Apollonius having, no doubt, on this occasion publicly manifested his faith, he applied to him the rescript of Trajan.

[2] *Digest*, xlviii. 19, 30.

of them. Now this prohibition was contrary to one of the most imperative commands of the evangelical law: "Go and teach all nations." It would have put a stop to conversions, and it gave authority to take action against those who sought to make them.

Meanwhile the search for Christians was not as yet commanded, since Tertullian wrote in peace his books which are so severe towards the pagans, and since the priests could teach, heretics discuss, believers come publicly, as did Origen,[1] to the aid of martyrs in prison, assist them at the tribunal, encourage them even in the amphitheatre, and finally, since, despite the very large number of bishops,[2] not one of them perishes, and men left to the Christians their chiefs and their doctors, their assemblies and their elections, their schools of catechumens and their cemeteries,[3] that is to say, their organization and their worship. There were

[1] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, vi. 3.

[2] In the single province of Africa, Cyprian assembled in council eighty-seven bishops (*de Hæreticis baptizandis*, in Cypr. *oper.*, p. 328), and when he suffered martyrdom in 258, he was the first African bishop who sealed his faith with his blood. The fiery Tertullian lived undisturbed even to extreme old age, *usque ad decrepitam ætatem* (S. Jerome, *de Vir. illustr.*, 53). The policy of the persecution called that of Severus was not to attack any chief, though they were very easy to be found. However, two bishops are mentioned who must have perished at that time, Zoticus, bishop of Comana in Cappadocia, and Irenæus, bishop of Lyons. Of the first, Tillemont makes no mention, and the Bollandists say of him (July 21st): *ubi et quo tempore martyrium fecerit fateor mihi hactenus incompertum esse.* As for the second, S. Cyprian and Clement of Alexandria do not refer to him, though he was the most prominent of their contemporaries; and Tertullian, who often copies him, does not give him the title of martyr. In one of his books written after the persecution of Severus, *quum furor Severi restinctus fuerat*, and at a later date than the year 208 (cf. Nœsselt, *de Vera ætate script. Tertull.*, in the Tertullian of Œhler, vol. iii. pp. 540 and 605), the priest of Carthage speaks in the same phrase of S. Justin, whom he styles martyr, and of Irenæus, of whom he merely says that he was *omnium doctrinarum curiosissimus explorator* (*Adv. Valent.*, 5). If the bishop of Lyons had suffered martyrdom Tertullian would have given to him the same title as to Justin. The Bollandists are reduced to saying (June 28th): *nihil invenimus de S. Irenæo quod esset antiquitate aliqua . . . . spectabile.* The records of his martyrdom do not in fact exist, and Gregory of Tours is the first who relates it (*Gloria Mart.*, 50). S. Jerome, in the *de Vir. illustr.*, terminates the chapter which he devotes to Irenæus, the 35th, by these words, which necessarily call for mention of the martyrdom if it had taken place: *floruit maxime sub Commodo principe.* True, he says of him in his commentary *in Isaiam*, 64: *Diligentissime vir apostolicus scribit Irenæus episcopus Lugd. et martyr, multarum origines explicans hæreseon.* But, on the one hand, this book of S. Jerome having been completed after 411, that is, two centuries after the death of Irenæus, there may be in this an echo of the improbable legend reported by Gregory of Tours, and which was at this epoch already formed. On the other hand, these simple words: *et martyr*, may be a gloss slipped into the text. We know what strange liberties were taken by the copyists of manuscript or by those under whom they laboured. The recent discovery of three letters of S. Ignatius would be a new proof, if we may believe Cureton, in his *Corpus Ignatianum* (Berlin, 1849).

[3] The use of the cemeteries was not prohibited to the Christians until ordered by an edict of Valerian. (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, vii. 11, and S. Cyprian, *Epist.*, 83.)

executions to frighten the Church and to put a stop by means of terror to its propagandism. But the strokes fell only on the insignificant and the slaves, for whom they gave themselves little concern. The victims then were those who had come out of the lower classes, and who in all revolutions are the most active, those who by their own acts designate themselves to the judge or to the mob by their ardour in seeking punishment, or who, denounced to the magistrate by personal enemies, defended themselves in such a way as to bring them under the penalty of the law. But the vocation of martyrdom is never the lot save of a small number, and informing in cases of this nature had its dangers, because the *delator* was not sure that the accused would not upset the accusation with the single word they demanded of him: "No, I am not a Christian!" Now the informer who did not prove his statement incurred grave responsibilities.[1]

The edict of Severus did not prescribe any search, so each governor enforced it according to his own character. He of Cappadocia, irritated against the Christians who had converted his wife, forced several of them by violent tortures to sacrifice to the gods.[2] Lyons had the same ardour for idolatry which it displayed later in behalf of the new faith. If the tradition of the Church were sufficient to dispense with all historic testimony, S. Irenæus perished there; but his contemporaries, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and S. Cyprian, know nothing of his martyrdom. The two great African cities, Carthage and Alexandria, which were rivals

[1] An individual who accused Severus of magic before his elevation to empire was crucified. Macrinus caused to be put to death the *delatores, si non probarent* (Capit., *Macr.*, 12), and Gratian will renew this law: the *delator* who does not prove his accusation well-founded shall suffer the penalty which would have been inflicted on the guilty. (*Cod. Theod.*, ix. 1, 14.) If the charge was admitted the accuser received one fourth of the property of the condemned; it was therefore a business at once lucrative and dangerous. This legal responsibility explains why the judges should have refused to receive mere denunciations by letter, and required the presence of the *delator*. (See below, pp. 237 *et seq.*) The letter of Marcus Aurelius which circulated in the Christian schools of the time of Tertullian is absolutely false, but the punishment of the calumniator which it inflicts: *adjecta etiam accusatoribus damnatione et quidem tetriore* (*Apol.*, 5), is a characteristic feature of the morals of the age. The condemned Christians, being held as criminals against majesty, had their goods confiscated (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, vi. 2), and we have just seen that a part of them reverted to the *delator*. But their poverty rendered this profit insignificant. Hence the most usual accuser was the populace, who by their clamours and sometimes by their acts of violence provoked an execution.

[2] Alexander, bishop of this province, was imprisoned.

in magnificence,[1] were two ardent centres of religious life.[2] Directly the edict of Severus became known there, they gave loose reign to their pagan fury, and the magistrates, formally addressed to fulfil their legal duty, yielded to the popular pressure. 'Many victims are mentioned for Egypt,[3] among whom was the father of Origen. Yet, at Alexandria, Bishop Demetrius, and the master of Clement and Origen, despite the ardour of his zeal, escaped; it was the same in all the great cities, at Carthage, Antioch, Smyrna, and Rome. The clergy of this latter city were already numerous, and there occurred, even at this moment, angry divisions among them; none of their members appear to have been disturbed: Pope Zephyrinus and Callistus, who was at that time very prominent, certainly were not. In the province of Africa, one of the latest evangelized, it is almost all obscure Christians who perished.

The City of Antioch personified.[4]

The persecution began at Carthage in consequence of a riot; the populace wished to force the governor to close the cemeteries of the Christians.[5] Before coming to that, there had certainly been

[1] Herod., vii. 6.

[2] See above (p. 31), the riots caused at Carthage by the priestesses of the goddess Cælestis. As for Alexandria, it was the great laboratory of ideas and beliefs.

[3] It is doubtful, however, whether Christianity was then very widely spread in Egypt, outside the capital, and whether, consequently, the persecution made many martyrs there. Down to Demetrius, who then occupied the episcopal chair of Alexandria, all Egypt had had but a single bishop (cf. Eutychius, *Ann.*, i. p. 354, Pocock's trans.), while the province of Africa, evangelized at so late a period (Tillemont, *Mém. eccles.*, i. p. 754), reckoned a very great number of them. But in Alexandria the persecution was violent. (Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, vi. 1: *μάλιστα ἐπλήθυεν ἐπ' Ἀλεξανδρείας.*)

[4] Engraved stone (cornelian, $\frac{35}{100}$ by $\frac{25}{100}$ in.) of the *Cabinet de France*, No. 1,749 of the catalogue, and Collection de Luynes, No. 98. M. Chabouillet thinks he recognizes the emperor Alexander Severus in the warrior who is crowning the city. Bronze coins struck at Antioch during the reign of this prince bear the same types. See in vol. iv. p. 667, the Vatican statue also personifying the city of Antioch [or more strictly, the *fortune* of the city.—*Ed.*].

[5] In remembrance of the ten plagues of Egypt, ecclesiastical writers have maintained that the Church has suffered ten persecutions. They reckon four anterior to Severus: under Nero (see vol. iv. pp. 506 *et seq.*), Domitian (*ibid.*, p. 726), Trajan (*ibid.*, pp. 816 *et seq.*), and Marcus

acts of violence in the streets, and the more the Christians gained assurance by their increasing number,[1] the more intrepidity and haughtiness they manifested in their language toward the pagans, the more hateful their adversaries would find these men who seemed to desire to set themselves above other citizens by manifesting contempt for their gods, their festivals, and their pleasures.[2] Thus, when Rome in 204 displayed all its magnificence to celebrate the Secular Games,[3] Tertullian had just written, with his usual vehemence, a book against all spectacles.

The first martyrs of Carthage were the twelve Scillitans, in 180,[4] among whom were several women. In the second *combat*,

Aurelius (vol. v. pp. 220 *et seq.*); that of Severus, which is known to no pagan writer, and of which Lactantius does not speak, is counted the fifth and represented as very violent. It is strange that Dion Cassius, so prolix a writer, has not once named the Christians, and that in all the *Augustan History*, several editors of which lived under Constantine, we find barely a few words about them. Evidently these persecutions, which for fifteen centuries have disturbed the human conscience, took place in the inferior strata of society, or at least did not agitate the surface, and, down to Decius, were only local police measures or popular excesses.

[1] We know the exaggerations of Justin (*Dial. cum Tryph.*), of S. Irenæus (*Adv. Hær.*, i. 3), and of Tertullian (*ad Scap.*, 2, and *Apol.*, 37): they are famous. The *Octavius* of Minucius Felix, written toward the close of the second century, exhibits the Christians as very few in number and very obscure. At the middle of the century following, Origen, comparing them to the mass of the pagans, yet said: ὡς νῦν πάνυ ὀλίγοι (*Contra Cels.*, viii. 69). In the province most easily opened to Christianity, in Syria, "no Christian catacomb anterior to the fourth century, no well-authenticated Christian monument reared before the peace of the Church, has up to the present time been discovered." (De Vogué, *Inscr. sémitiques*, p. 55.) Still, it is certain that the number of the Christians increased greatly during the long peace which they enjoyed between Severus and Decius.

[2] The terms of reproach applied to the Christians by the pagans are enumerated in the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix, by Cæcilius, the advocate of paganism.

[3] There were two kinds of *Ludi sæculares*: those which took place every hundred years at the anniversary of the foundation of Rome, and which had been celebrated under Claudius in the year of Rome 800, under Antoninus in the year 900, which they will still celebrate under Philippus in the year 1001; and those which, connected with a great event of which we have no knowledge, took place every 110 years: thus, under Augustus in 737; under Domitian, who set them forward six years, in 841; under Septimius Severus, who re-established the regular order, in 957.

[4] See vol. v. p. 226. I have placed their execution at this date, following M. L. Renier, who has with correct judgment recognized the consuls of A.D. 180, *Præsente II et Condiano coss.*, in the consuls mentioned in the *Acta* and whose names have been corrupted by the copyists. What is said by Tertullian, *de Corona* (*initio*), concerning the long peace which the Christians enjoyed in Africa before A.D. 202, justifies our opinion. The Scillitan martyrs appear to have been the first in Africa (Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 34), as those of Lyons were the first in Gaul. Sulpicius Severus (ii. 46) says in reference to the tardy evangelization of Gaul: *Serius trans Alpes Dei religione suscepta.* On the order of proceedings followed in the trials of the Christians, see the learned paper by M. Le Blant in the *Mém. de l'Acad. des inscr.*, vol. xxx. part second. The author makes a distinction between the *Acta* or transcriptions, more or less exact, of the judicial examinations, access to which the Christian sometimes obtained by payment of money, and the *Passiones*, in which the historical foundation is

which took place the tenth year of the reign of Severus (202),[1] the slave Felicitas and the matron Perpetua also perished, with others who made confession.

Their sacrifice is related at length in the *Martyrology*, in accounts filled with miraculous visions and heroic deaths. These soldiers of Christ were noble combatants, but of a sort as yet unknown. Before giving rise to monastic orders, to all the macerations of the flesh, and to heroic acts of devotion which are still exhibited,[2] they were the inspiration of martyrs. Read the Acts of S. Perpetua. It has been said that certain pages seem to have been written with a pen plucked from an angel's wing, so touching is the poetry found in them. I grant it; and if this death was not courted,[3] if, dragged against her will before the judge, Perpetua refused to conceal her faith, it is the sentiment of duty and honour which animates her, and her courage is sublime. But, as a historian of human deeds, I must, in the saint, recognize also the woman who publicly braves the laws of her country, and must exhibit the mother abandoning her child, the daughter exposing her aged father to every insult. "Have pity on my white locks," said he to her, "have pity on thy father. Behold thy mother, thy brothers, thy son, who cannot live without thee. Suffer thy pride, *animos*, to bend; do not condemn us all to mortal woes!"[4] And he kissed her hands, he threw himself at her feet. But she exclaimed: "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; I know you not." The procurator also cried out to her: "Spare then thy father, spare thy son!" As a last trial he caused her father to be beaten with rods in her presence. She persisted, and it is her glory, that also of the Church which knew how to inspire such sacrifices, and which gathered the fruit of them. But, it must be

burdened with marvellous legends. The *Acta proconsularia* of S. Cyprian (see in chap. xcvi.) and the *passio* of S. Perpetua, give a good understanding of these two kinds of documents. On the sources of certain martyrologies, see another article of M. Le Blant, 1879.

[1] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, vi. 2.

[2] Missionaries and sisters of charity.

[3] It must have been, since the law forbade searching for Christians, and only attacked those who offered themselves as martyrs.

[4] *Ne universos nos extermines* (Ruinart, *Acta sincera*). Her father goes away. "I thank God," she says, "that I have been several days without seeing my father; his absence permits me to enjoy a little rest." (*Ibid.*) S. Irenæus of Sirmium will speak in the same way. (Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, i. 430 *et seq.*)

said, this young woman who went to her death crushing the hearts of all her family is a hero of a peculiar nature. She died for herself in order to live eternally: true heroes die for others; the sister of charity does so.

Modern theologians continue to say: "The question of salvation is a personal question, and it matters little that the family or the

Burial Vaults (*Cubicula*), with Fresco Paintings.[1]

city be broken up by it;"[2] as if the city and the family were not of divine institution, since they are a necessity of our nature. Christianity loves death; it adorns it like a bride impatiently awaited; it calls it life: *Vivit*, it writes upon the tomb of its own, he lives for immortality. The more tears and broken hearts there were around these voluntary victims, the more meritorious appeared the sacrifice, and the higher the martyr seemed to mount into the

[1] Sepulchres adjoining the Jewish catacombs of the *Via Appia*. (Roller, *op. cit.*, pl. iv. No. 2.)

[2] Abbé Freppel, *Saint Cyprien*, p. 53.

glory of God, whence he would protect those whom he left behind him. Heaven and earth were henceforth but one city, having in the saints its patrons, and in its divine clientage the company of the faithful:[1] a beautiful and poetic belief which again found Jacob's ladder with "the angels of the Lord ascending and descending upon it." So each community was happy and proud of these immolations. Sometimes friends and neighbours, in their fierce piety, exalted the ardour of the martyrs. They repeated to them these words of S. Paul: "It is Jesus Christ who suffers in you;"[2] they showed them all the celestial army present at their triumph and ready to receive them into its glory. Origen urges his father to the execution;[3] Numidius, "with a saintly joy," beholds his wife burning on the pile; the mother of S. Symphorian, her son going to death; another, her husband in the midst of tortures, cries to him: "Raise your eyes on high, and you shall see him for whom you fight." The love of God replaces in them all the affections which God has nevertheless imposed in bestowing them upon us. Heaven is opened to their gaze; of the earth they see, they feel nothing, not even the iron claws or teeth of the lions which rend their flesh.[4] Dragged in the arena by a mad bull, Blandina and Perpetua "converse with the Lord," and, when taken up bleeding, ask when the *combat* will begin. A divine frenzy had seized upon them. Man must have an ideal; it is the honour of Christianity to have placed it so high, when no one around retained any. It was also perilous to place it so far from earth, not from the enjoyments which may be found here, but from the duties which we are here required to fulfil.

Mysticism, ecstasy, hallucination, are three successive rounds of the ladder by which the soul mounts to God and becomes lost in him, while yet remaining attached to the body. During this energetic concentration of the thought upon a single object, the physical sensibility is abolished by a sort of temporary paralysis of the nervous system, which causes the disappearance of even the

[1] The expression is S. Augustine's: . . . . *tanquam patronis* (*de Cura pro mortuis*, 19). An inscription calls them . . . . *apud Deum advocati* (De Rossi, *Roma sotter.*, ii. 383).

[2] 2 *Cor.*, i. 5.

[3] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, vi. 2. In his treatise *ad Martyres*, 27, Origen shows all heaven contemplating the combat and the victory of those who confessed.

[4] *Nihil crus sentit in nervo, cum animus in cælo est* (Tertullian, *ad Mart.*, 2).

feeling of pain, as we suppress it naturally by anæsthetics. This condition, to-day well-known, is, in the language of the Church, *rapture;* in the language of the world, the enthusiasm which makes the strength of heroes: that of Mucius Scævola burning his hand in the fire of the altar, and that of martyrs smiling at the most cruel punishments. "Look us well in the face," said a

Vintage Scenes on a Sarcophagus in the Lateran Museum. (Roller, pl. xliv. fig. 3.) Symbolical representation of the harvest made by the Church "in the vineyard" of the Lord.

martyr to a pagan present in the prison at his last repast, "look at me well, to recognize me at the last judgment."

This ardent faith, these tragic spectacles, were not good for paganism. Conscience revolted at witnessing such deaths, and men who had come to these scenes as to some pleasure, went away troubled in heart and asking themselves: "What is then this faith which gives so great courage and so much hope?" The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church,[1] "and the Church, like a

[1] Tertullian, *Apol.*, 50.

Sarcophagus in alto-relievo of the Museum of the Lateran, found at S. Paolo da fuori. (Roller, pl. lxv. p. 281.) See p. 233, n. 1.

vine whose shoots are cut back, became the more fruitful for it."[2] Oftentimes even the magistrate would have wished to dismiss the *devoted*, who came and demanded death of him with the fervour of a Hindoo throwing himself under the car of the god of Juggernaut.[3] He required only one word, an appearance of submission to the law. "Since you believe in only one God, sacrifice to Jupiter simply," said one. "Swear by the only God," said another.[4] They refuse, and the Church encourages them in their generous obstinacy. Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen, even drew up manuals for the *preparation* for martyrdom.[5] The *passiones*, read to the church, after the gospel, were another *preparation*. What contagious ardour was awakened in these assemblies, when they were there taught that the martyr became "the companion of Christ in his suffering,"[6] or when the deacon read the letter of S. Ignatius to the Romans, who would have desired to save him from execution: "I write to you living, but enamoured of death.[7] I am afraid of your affection! What is death for Christ? A beautiful sunset preceding the radiant dawn of a divine day. I am God's wheat;

[1] Explanation of the engraving on p. 231.—At the top, on the left, Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus; S. Peter and the cock announcing the denial; Moses receiving the Law; in the medallion, the persons buried within; at the right, the sacrifice of Abraham, and Pilate ready to wash his hands. At the bottom, Moses and the pillar of fire; Daniel and the lions; Jesus opening the eyes of a blind man; Jesus blessing the bread and fishes.

[2] S. Justin, *Dial. cum Tryph.*, p. 337 (1636).

[3] Clement of Alexandria, blaming what he calls a brutal impatience for death, adds: "Their punishment is not a martyrdom, but a suicide; they are like the Indian gymnosophists who light their own funeral pile" (*Strom.*, iv. 4); and the sixtieth canon of the Council of Elvira sanctioned this doctrine. This intensity of the divine love, which tends to absolute separation from the world and union with God, is a psychological condition which is also found among the sûfis of Persia and elsewhere. See the translation of the *Fruit Garden* of Sa'adi, by Barbier de Meynard.

[4] *Acta S. Tarachi* in 304; *S. Philæ* in 302.

[5] Le Blant, *op. laud.*, p. 65. The fourth book of the *Stromata* of Clement of Alexandria is another. They even employed, to prepare the martyrs for the torture, prolonged fastings, which heightened the mystical exaltation, and they served to *martyribus incertis* a bountiful feast, ending with narcotic or intoxicating draughts, so as to prevent a failure, by delivering to the executioner only an inert body which was no longer sensible to pain . . . . *Condito mero, tanquam antidoto præmedicatum ita enervastis ut paucis ungulis titillatus (hoc enim ebrietas sentiebat) . . . . respondere non potuerit amplius, atque . . . . cum singultus et ructus solos haberet . . . . discessit* (Tertullian, *de Jejunio*, 12). S. Augustine (*Tractatus* xxvii. on S. John, § 12) makes allusion to this usage . . . . *quia bene manducaverat et bene biberat, tanquam illa esca saginatus et illo calice ebrius, tormenta non sensit.*

[6] *Quid gloriosius quam collegam passionis cum Christo factum fuisse?* (Letters of Confessors at Rome to S. Cyprian: Cypr., *Op., Ep.* 31.)

[7] Ἐρῶν τοῦ ἀποθανεῖν (*Ep. ad Rom.*). On the *Letters* of S. Ignatius, see vol. iv. p. 819, n. 1.

the teeth of these beasts will crush me, and I shall become the purified bread of the Lord. Ah, let me enjoy my lions!"[1]

With the account of the tortures they mingled that of the visions which the martyrs had had in the exaltation of faith and the fever of the last day, or of those which the sacred writers afforded them to exhibit the promised reward. "We suffered," said Satur, one of the companions of Perpetua, "and we forsook our bodies. Four angels bore us to the East, towards an intense light. Arriving at a garden where rose trees tall as cypresses were perpetually strewing the earth with their flowers, we approached a place the walls of which seemed made of light. At the gate four angels were standing; they clad us in robes of shining white, and when we had entered, we heard voices repeating: 'Holy, holy, holy!' In the midst we saw as it were a man seated; he had white hair and the countenance of a young man. The angels raised us up and he gave us the kiss of peace, and the four-and-twenty elders seated at his side said unto us: 'Go and enjoy yourselves.' And, indeed, we experienced more delight than we ever had in the flesh." Thus, "the joy of heaven rose out of the dismal prison, and the crown of flowers bloomed above the bloody thorns."[2] In this literature of martyrdom which no people had as yet known, we find as ever the same inability of the imagination to picture the abode of the blessed, but it was no less a new realm of poetry, and exalted souls asked nothing more.

The pagans said of the martyrs: "They are fools." Bossuet, taking up the word to glorify it, celebrates "the extravagance of Christianity," and we still glorify "the foolishness of the cross."

To the ostentatious display of piety and courage by the confessors, which provoked the pagans and impelled them to new acts of violence, Clement prefers the prudence, which, without cowardly concessions, avoids peril;[3] S. Cyprian invites martyrdom, but does not wish to hasten to meet it;[4] S. Peter of Alexandria

[1] *Ὀναίμην τῶν θηρίων* (*ibid.*). It cannot be doubted that, in the narrative of the theatrical suicide of Peregrinus, Lucian had in mind the martyrs who also "offered themselves voluntarily to death."

[2] See, in addition, the fine peroration of the *de Mortalitate* of S. Cyprian.

[3] *Strom.*, iv. 4, 17. He himself retired from Alexandria at the moment of persecution.

[4] See S. Cypr., *Ep.*, 83: *Letter to the Clergy and the People of Carthage.*

even consents that his life should be ransomed by payment of money,[1] and the letters of ransom were numerous.[2] Besides, Jesus himself had retired at the approach of his enemies, "because his hour was not yet come," and he had said to his disciples: "And when they persecute you in this city, flee into the next." These words have become the doctrine of the Church.

We admire the holy enthusiasm "of the soldiers of Christ," these sacrifices which are the highest honour of human nature, and we know that martyrs make causes to triumph. History must make great account of this singular condition of souls, because it explains the approaching revolutions; but it is its province also to note, as one of the important facts in human annals, the rise, in the western world, of a new spirit, whose influence still endures and which has impelled so many holy men to break with the duties of social life. When the persecutions shall have ceased, this exclusive love of heaven will continue to foment disgust with earth, and will call out from the age infinite multitudes of men, who, by remaining in it, would have aided in rendering its life more pure. Before

[1] *Paciscares cum delatore, vel milite, vel furunculo aliquo præsida* (Tertullian, *de Fuga*, 12). Communities obtained immunity from disturbance by payment of a sum of money; "in which," says Peter of Alexandria (*Can.*, 12), "they have displayed more attachment to Jesus Christ than to their money, carrying out the precept of Scripture: 'The ransom of a man's life is his riches.'" (*Prov.*, xiii. 8; cf. Tillemont, *Hist. des Emp.*, vol. iii. p. 104.) He says in addition: *Iis qui pecuniam dederunt . . . . crimen intendi non potest* (*ibid.*, *apud* Labbe, *Concil.*, vol. i. p. 955; cf. Fleury, *Hist. eccles.*, vol. ii. p. 51, and Le Blant, *Polyeucte et le zèle téméraire*, in the *Mém. de l'Acad. des inscr.*, vol. xxviii. 2nd part).

[2] "The bishops," says Fleury (*ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 86), "approved this conduct." Not all, but the usage was certainly common, for Tertullian with his customary vigour attacks (*de Fuga*, 12) "those who purchase by tribute the right to be a Christian," and S. Cyprian, in his letter to Antonianus, bishop of Numidia, enumerating the various *lapses*, finds that the least culpable is that of the Christian, who, having had occasion to procure for himself a letter of ransom, goes to the magistrate, or sends another in his place, and says to him: "Being a Christian, it is not permitted to me to sacrifice unto idols, but I give money not to do it." *Is cui libellus acceptus est dicit . . . . cum occasio libelli fuisset oblata . . . . ad magistratum veni . . . . dare me hoc præmium ne quod non licet faciam* (Cypr., *Ep.*, 53, *ad Ant.*; edit. Baluze). He often speaks of the *libellatici* (see *ibid.*, index, at this word). By these letters, in which there seems to have been quite a traffic, the Christians acknowledged that they had sacrificed to the gods, although they had not done so, or the judge declared that those who had obtained them should no longer be disturbed (Lambert, *Rem. sur les œuvres de S. Cyprien*, p. 353), which reminds us of our cards of citizenship during the Reign of Terror. In both cases, tolerance was purchased by payment of money. This was not a tribute similar to the *didrachma* of the Jews under the Romans, and the *haratch* of the Greeks under the Mohammedans; the government had imposed no tax on the Christians: *nihil nobis Cæsar indixit in hunc modum stipendiariæ sectæ* (Tertullian, *de Fuga*, 12). It was an extortion of the magistrates, at which the government willingly closed its eyes. This ransom, being in fact a penalty, appeared to satisfy the law and dispense with shedding the blood of inoffensive men.

Constantine, this spirit makes martyrs; after him, it will make monks, occupied at first with their salvation, afterwards with that of others, and who will then be organized in powerful communities in the bosom of civil society, to lead and dominate it. Without the monastic institution, which grows out of the idea which the martyrs followed, Catholicism would not have become a persecutor in its turn; at least it would not have been so with the results which the monks infused into persecution.

To the survivors of exile, of prison, of tortures, a sanctity was accorded which induced some to usurp episcopal functions, by giving letters of communion to *lapsi*, that is, to brethren who had denied their faith. There were, at Carthage and Rome, great debates on this subject, to which the letters of S. Cyprian bear testimony. It was the commencement of a poetical and dangerous doctrine, that of indulgences, founded on the merits of saints.

As to the confessors whom the magistrates had not spared, their death being for the faithful a matter for edification and just pride, the sacred writers of after ages have strangely multiplied their number. The murder, for instance, of the 9,000 Lyonese slaughtered with their bishop, S. Irenæus, by the legions of Severus, and the rivers of blood which flow through the city,[1] are a legend which those even do not venture to accept who would be most disposed to swell the number of the martyrs. The wise Tillemont does not mention them; it seems to be no better assured that Pope Victor suffered martyrdom at Rome,[2] that Severus put to death S. Andæolus by ordering his head to be cleft into four parts by a wooden sword, and the manner in which he quotes the *Acts* of S. Felicitas and of her seven sons, indicates, under his prudent reserve, doubts which are justified by the strange details given by the sacred writer.[3]

The friendship which unites the interlocutors of the dialogue

[1] . . . . *et per plateas flumina currerent de sanguine* (Grég. de Tours, i. 27).

[2] Fleury (*Hist. eccl.*, i. p. 522) makes him die a natural death, and this is the conclusion to be drawn from chap. xxiv. of S. Jerome, in his *de Vir. illustr.*, devoted to S. Victor.

[3] Like Tillemont, M. De Rossi places the martyrdom of S. Felicitas and of her seven sons under Marcus Aurelius. M. Aubé (*Hist. des persée.*, pp. 438 *et seq.*) combats this opinion; with the utmost rigour he would consent to date back the punishment of Felicitas to the reign of Severus. But the reasons which he gives do not allow him to accept the authenticity of these *Acts*. I reject then this legend from the reign of Severus, as M. Aubé has rejected it from the reign of Marcus Aurelius.

of Minucius shows that Christians and pagans could live in very good understanding, and many governors, seeing, like Seneca's brother and Festus, with the utmost indifference practices which did not endanger the public order, favoured the commerce of letters of ransom. Tertullian cites some who, gentle by nature and sceptics in religion, repudiated the obligation to put innocent beings to death, and determined to go back to Rome "without a spot of blood on their fasces.[1] Asper declared openly that he did not like that kind of trials. When he had to judge a Christian, he appeared to make him put the questions, and was satisfied with the slightest word and set him free without compelling him to offer sacrifice. Severus furnished them the reply which permitted the judge to discharge them. A Christian is brought before Pudens with a letter which denounced his faith; he tears up the letter, sets the captive at liberty, and declares that he will not receive an accusation except when the accuser shall present himself at his tribunal, in conformity with the law. Candidus treated them as embroiled in some quarrel, and sent them back to their towns, with these words: "Go and arrange your disagreements with your fellow-citizens." "Unhappy men," said another to them, "if you want to perish, have you not cords and precipices enough?" and he drives them from his tribunal. The governor of Syria opens to Peregrinus the doors of the prison, "knowing him to be foolish enough to go to death through vain-glory."[2] One day, in Africa, where Severus was proconsular legate, the populace demanded of him the death of several Christians, members of the senate of Carthage; he resisted the clamours of the infuriated mob,[3] and, when emperor, recalled Antipater, a governor of Bithynia, who appeared to him too ready

[1] *Ad Scapul.*, 4. A Christian magistrate, Studius, possessing the *jus gladii*, asked S. Ambrose if it was contrary to the faith to execute the guilty; the saint answered: *Scio plerosque gentilium gloriari solitos, quod incruentam de administratione provinciali securim revexerint* (*Epist.*, xxv. § 3).

[2] Tertullian, *ad Scap.*, 5. Lucian, *Peregr.*, 14. This is the person who burned himself at Olympia. He had been a Christian, and at that time regarded as a confessor. The account of Lucian at once proves the fellowship of the Christians and the tolerance of the magistrates, who suffered the faithful to attend their imprisoned brethren day and night.

[3] Tertullian, *ibid.*, 4, and Fleury, *Hist. eccl.*, vi. 32. Tertullian relates (*de Cor. Mil.*, i.) that one day, as by order of the emperor, they were distributing largesses in camp to the soldiers, who, according to custom, came to receive them wearing a crown of laurel on their heads, one of them presented himself holding his crown in his hand. At first they point their fingers at him, then they rail at him, and finally grow indignant. The clamour reaches the tribune.

to make use of the sword,[1] very probably against the Christians. The recall of a governor was an extreme and rare measure; this was the more significant as this Antipater had been one of the ministers of the prince. Unfortunately, Severus could not see or hear everything, and the law, defied by Christians eager for martyrdom, or too scrupulously obeyed by heartless magistrates, sent to execution men whose only crime was praying to God in a different way from their persecutors.

Certain Jews have replied to the maledictions of Christians: "You hate us for having condemned Jesus? What would you be if we had not condemned him?" We might also repeat the words of Tertullian and say: "Would the Christian soil have possessed its fruitfulness if the blood of the martyrs had not irrigated it?" Two verities which do not efface the stain imprinted by the death of the just, or rather, which show the sad necessities imposed on man by evil institutions. In Judæa, public duties and religious power were in the same hands.[2] Pagan Rome also suffered from their union, the Middle Ages from their rivalry; in one case, cruel persecutions; in the other, bloody wars, everywhere and always death sown broadcast in the name of Him who made life. At no one of these epochs did they know the liberty of conscience, which separates the priesthood and the empire without arming the one against the other. Blessed be those who have given it unto us!

"Why do you not do as the others?" said he to the soldier. "I cannot," he answered, "I am a Christian." It was a breach of discipline and a refusal of obedience. The soldier was sent to prison. "He there awaits," says Tertullian, "the largess of Christ," *donativum Christi*. Had the persecution been violent, this heroic bravado would have been immediately punished by a military execution. Notice that the Christians of Carthage blamed the soldier, but that Tertullian gives his approval and proposes him as a model.

[1] . . . . δόξας δὲ ἑτοιμότερον χρῆσθαι τῷ ξίφει τὴν ἀρχὴν παρελύθη (Philost., *Vit. Soph.*, ii. 24.

[2] According to *Leviticus* (xxiv. 10), the blasphemer is stoned and all the people take part in his execution. This is harsher than the *crimen majestatis* of the Romans.

[3] Roller, pl. xliii. No. 3.

The Good Shepherd between the sheep and the goats, that is, between the good and the wicked.[3]

CHAPTER XCII.

CARACALLA, MACRINUS, AND ELAGABALUS (211-222 A.D.).

I.—Caracalla (February 2, 211—April 8, 217); the Right of Citizenship accorded to all the Inhabitants of the Empire.

SEVERUS has long occupied our study; he deserved it. We shall pass rapidly over his successors until we again find princes and events worthy to arrest our attention.

Philadelphia.[1]

The father of Caracalla had done everything to maintain good feeling between his sons. He recommended it to them by wise counsels, by the example of the affectionate union which reigned in the paternal mansion, and he urged the senate and the people to remind the young princes repeatedly of the necessity of it. Each year there was celebrated throughout the Empire "the festival of brotherly love," *philadelphia;*[2] the senate, by solemn sacrifices, besought the gods to maintain it,[3] and Severus caused medals to be struck which represented his two sons about to clasp hands, with these words as legend: *Perpetua concordia.*[4] It is said that during his last illness he sent to them the discourse which Sallust places in the mouth of Micipsa dying, in order to exhort

Concordia Augustorum.[5]

[1] Coin of Perinthus struck under Septimius Severus, with the legend, ΦΙΑΑΔΕΑΦΕΙΑ ΠΕΡΙΝΘΙΩΝ ΝΕΟΚΟΡΩΝ, around the urn of Games placed upon a table and bearing the word: ΠΥΘΙΑ, the Pythian games. Large bronze.

[2] Especially in the Hellenic East. Eckhel, vii. 231; Mionnet, iv. p. 128, No. 179. M. Dumont (*Éphèbie attique*, vol. i. p. 299) thinks that the Φιλαδέλφεια were constituted for Marcus Aurelius and Verus, perhaps even earlier.

[3] Dion, lxxvii. 1.

[4] Eckhel, vii. 231. A bronze of Severus has also for a legend: *Concordia Augustorum*: another of Geta bears: *Concordiæ æternæ*: this was the official mark.

[5] Caracalla and Geta sacrificing on a tripod. Bronze coin of Geta.

his children to union. He himself and every one else was aware of the mistake he had committed in styling them *Augustus*, when the one had not over the other the ascendancy of age and authority

Caracalla in Youth.[1]

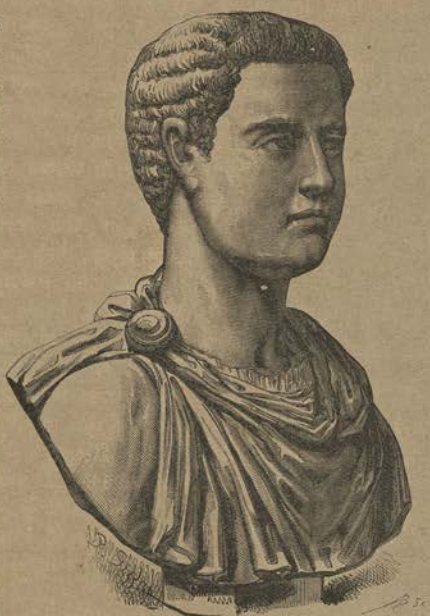
that Marcus Aurelius had had over Verus. These equal rights, granted[2] to young men hardly out of their childhood,[3] promised

[1] Bust of the Campana Museum, found in the ruins of the Circus Maximus. (Henry d'Escamps, *op. cit.*, No. 105.)

[2] Except that of sovereign pontiff, which was not divisible. As to the rest, from the first day Caracalla conducted himself as if he alone had the power (Dion, lxxvii. 1), and Geta barely enjoyed the imperial honours.

[3] Caracalla, born April 4th, 188, had not yet completed his twenty-third year; Geta, born May 27th, 189, was only twenty-two. The name *Caracalla*, or *Caracallus* (Dion, lxxviii. 3), came to him from a Gallic garment, a sort of tunic with a hood, which he distributed among the common people of Rome and to his soldiers, the *caracalle*, which the cenobites of Thebais afterwards adopted as their costume. His real name was Bassianus. Severus substituted for it that of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, which the coins and the inscriptions of monuments give

the Empire a tragedy; it occurred after a few months. Herodian shows them at Rome dividing between them the soldiers and the palace, of which they make two fortresses, where they fortified themselves, the one against the other, and ending by proposing to divide the Empire: Asia to Geta, the rest to his brother, each with one half of the senate, the armies, and the fleets. "But will you also divide your mother," said Julia to them. Dion is not aware of any such scheme, the announcement of which would have produced in Rome, where our historian was at that time, a profound sensation. The idea of establishing two Roman Empires could not have occurred to the politicians of that time, but it is curious that it should have originated in the head of a rhetorician, who, not finding the history of the family of Severus sensational enough, utilized all the processes of the schools to render it more dramatic to his taste.



Geta clothed in the *paludamentum*.[1]

Caracalla made use of more simple means. One day, having enticed his brother into the chamber of Julia, under pretext of a reconciliation, he slew him in the arms of their mother, who was

him. He was appointed Cæsar in 196, pontiff in 197, Augustus in 198, consul at sixteen, in 202. In the inscriptions his name is usually written *Aurellius*. Cf. *C. I. L.*, iii. p. 1,114.

[1] Museum of the Louvre. Bust in corallite marble, found at Gabii in a perfect state of preservation. The busts of Geta are very rare. Caracalla having commanded that the statues of his brother should be destroyed. (*Monum. Gab.*, No. 4, and Clarac, No. 97.)

covered with blood and wounded, he then hastened to the camp of the prætorians to secure a place of safety by purchasing that venal band. He told them he had just escaped death through the protection of his gods, and a large *donative* paid them the price of blood. The legion of Albano, more faithful to the memory of Severus, for some time closed its gates to the murderer: gold finally opened them to him.

Since the victim now became the assassin, Geta was declared a public enemy, and his name was erased from all the monuments, even from the Arch of Septimius Severus, on which traces of it are yet to be seen. It was a crime to pronounce his name, even in the comedies, where it was customary that some slave should bear it always, and even in wills. If a legacy had been made to an old servant so named, the deceased indeed escaped the wrath of Caracalla, but not his fortune, which was confiscated. They would have us believe what Dion relates of the terrible dreams in which Geta appeared to him, threatening, with sword in hand; in which he heard his father cry out to him: "I will kill thee as thou hast killed thy brother!" But, seeing that he consecrated in the temple of Serapis the sword which had served him for the accomplishment of the crime, we must think that he carried this remembrance very lightly. (February, 212.)[1]

The Arch of Septimius Severus.

To the senate, Caracalla justified himself by citing the example of Romulus, and no one was inclined to contradict the old legend which he then revived. At the end of his speech he declared that he recalled all those in exile. It was a promise of clemency; on the morrow the friends of Geta perished in great numbers.[2] The soldiers were let loose; in slaying they found pleasure and profit,

[1] The apotheosis of Geta, which he is said to have had pronounced, has been imagined to furnish occasion to make the play upon words: *sit divus non sit vivus* (Spart., *Geta*, 2). No document taken from inscriptions or coins justifies the assertion of Spartian. Cf. Eckhel, vii. 234. As to the interpretation given by Mommsen, of inscription No. 1,464 of the *C. I. L.*, vol. iii., I do not think it well founded.

[2] Dion (lxxvii. 4) goes so far as to speak of 20,000 Cæsarians and soldiers, partisans of Geta, who are reported to have been slaughtered in the palace.

for they pillaged the houses of those condemned and even of those who were not. From the house of Cilo, formerly prefect of Rome, whom Caracalla styled his father and whom he saved from their hands, they carried off gold, silver-plate, clothing, and furniture. Taking advantage of the terror which they inspired, they took ransoms, and exacted payment for blows which they were not to strike. They killed in behalf of the emperor and also on their own account. Caracalla must have abandoned to them the prefects of the prætorium. One of them was Papinian, whom an ancient writer calls "the asylum of law and the treasury of juristic science,"[1] and whom our Cujas regarded as "the greatest of the jurisconsults who have been or who will ever be."[2] It is said that he had enraged the prince by refusing to dishonour himself, as Seneca had done under Nero, by an apology for the fratricide. If the story is true, and there are reasons for admitting it, it was well to end thus; the great jurisconsult was himself a martyr to duty.[3] His son and Pertinax's, a grandson of Marcus Aurelius, a daughter of that prince, who had dared to weep for Geta, a nephew of Severus, a Thrasea, etc., met the same fate. Dion had drawn up the list of the senatorial victims; it has been lost, but we know that it was long: the first crime necessarily involved many others.

Æsculapius and Telesphorus, upon a Bronze of Caracalla. (P.M. TR. P. XVIII COS. IIII PP. SC.)

With the emperor, by nature base and wicked, "who," says a contemporary, "never loved any one,"[4] the reign of Commodus recommenced: the same orgies at the palace, the same massacres of men and wild beasts at the circus, the same insults to the senate, the same exactions under myriad forms. We must believe that, like so many other emperors who came into power young, he had intermittent fits of insanity.

We know, in fact, that Caracalla was diseased in mind as well

[1] Spart., *Sev.*, 21.

[2] *In proœmio ad Quæst. Papin.*

[3] Spartian (*Car.*, 8) and Aur. Victor (*de Cæs.*, xx.) reject this story, saying that it was not among the duties of the prefect of the prætorium to compose a discourse for the emperor. Doubtless, but Papinian was a relative of Geta, and, besides, enjoyed a high reputation; the apology which Caracalla demanded of him would certainly have produced a great effect in the interest of the murderer.

[4] Dion, lxxvii. 11.

as in body: the great number of coins of his which are in existence, with the image of the "healing" gods, attests his efforts to rid himself of some secret malady.[1] He loved to cause fear, and studied to give himself a fierce air, which his busts have preserved: they flattered him by trembling before him. A consular

Caracalla. (Bust of the Museum of Naples.) [Evidently a different person from the bust on p. 240.—*Ed.*]

having said to him that he resembled at all times a man in a rage, he took that for an eulogium and sent him 1,000,000 sesterces.[2] Before the senators he never ceased to glorify Sulla, so harsh towards the Conscript Fathers of the Republic, or extolled his compatriot Hannibal, so terrible to Rome.[3] And he did indeed make them really tremble, for he organized a vast system of espionage by means of soldiers charged with police duties. Through fear

[1] Dion, lxxvii. 15; Eckhel, vii. 212 *et seq.*
[2] Dion, lxxvii. 11.
[3] Herod., iv. 14.

lest a subaltern, by some inopportune severity, might discourage their zeal, he reserved to himself the cognizance of complaints preferred against them, and the judgment of the disciplinary penalties which they might incur. He intended to protect the men whom he had made his eyes to see and ears to hear, even when there was nothing either to see or to hear.[1] Hence every one found himself at the mercy of these agents of low degree, who were assured of impunity, from whom a denunciation cost fortune or life.

When he did not take the life or property by sentence of death or of confiscation, he ruined by capricious exactions. "He placed us under contribution," relates Dion, "for the provisions which he distributed to the soldiers or sold to them, like a tavern keeper. When he set out from Rome we had to prepare for him, at our expense, sumptuous lodgings along the route, even for the shortest journeys, and sometimes in places where he was not to pass. In the cities where it was supposed he would remain some time, it was circuses and amphitheatres that we were obliged to construct. In all that, he had but one purpose, to ruin us; he often repeated: 'No one but myself ought to have money, so that I may give it to my soldiers.' He was accustomed to notify us that he would at daybreak administer justice or attend to public affairs, and he kept us standing until after mid-day, sometimes even until night, without even receiving us under his vestibule." And while the "very illustrious" awaited a look, a word from the master, he was conducting chariots, fighting with gladiators, getting intoxicated, or mixing wine in *craters* to send to the soldiers of his guard in full cups, which the senators, parched with thirst and the heat of the sun, could not even detain on their passage.[2] Sometimes, adds Dion, he administered justice, and Philostratus reproduces one of these audiences, which assuredly lacks gravity, but at which the prince, this time, at least, did not lack good sense.[3]

The Grand Circus, on a Large Bronze of Caracalla. (SPQR. OPTIMO PRINCIPI SC.)

[1] Dion, lxxvii. 17.

[2] *Id., ibid.*

[3] *Vitæ Soph.*, ii. 30. The Sophist Philiscus claimed, by virtue of being a professor in the

The debauchee wished, like Domitian, to assume the character of an austere reformer. He punished adultery with death, although the law did not exact this severity, and caused four vestal virgins to be buried alive, whom he pretended had violated their vow. One of them, whom he had attempted to seduce, cried out on her way to punishment: "Cæsar well knows that I am still a virgin."[1]

Tyranny this time was not of profit to the provinces; they had to suffer all the exactions: crown money frequently required, gratuitous gifts, new imposts, old ones augmented, perhaps the fabrication of base money to pay his debts.[2] He doubled the fees for manumissions, legacies, and donations, abolished inheritances *ab intestato* and the immunities granted in these cases to near relatives of the deceased; and finally he declared all the inhabitants of the Empire citizens.[3] Some have seen in this rescript a grand measure of equity, or, at any rate, the completion of the revolution commenced by Cæsar: it was a fiscal expedient. The *peregrini* continued to pay their former contributions, and they were henceforth subject to the tributes which had been for the *cives* the release from the land-tax and the capitation.[4] This reform, which extended

university of Athens, *vacationem a publicis muneribus*. Caracalla terminated the discussion by saying, as was just: *Nolim ob breves atque miseras oratiunculas civitates privare munera præstituris, τῶν λειτουργησόντων*. But another day he did the contrary, granting the *vacatio munerum* to Philostratus of Lemnos for a declamation. (*Ibid.*)

[1] Dion, who reports these words, yet supposes her guilty. (lxxvii. 16.)

[2] There certainly were great monetary changes under Caracalla. We know that he reduced the *aureus* from $\frac{1}{45}$ to $\frac{1}{50}$, or an intrinsic value of 25·08 to 22·56, and that he first fabricated, in enormous quantities, the *argenteus Antoninianus*, debased coin, that is, of copper with a mixture of silver. The *Antoninianus*, which, from its normal weight of silver, should have been worth more than the denarius, about 10d., soon came to be only silvered copper. This falsification doubtless commenced under Caracalla, for Dion (*ibid.*, 14) formally accuses this prince of having issued coins of silvered lead and gilded copper; several medals, which give to Alexander Severus the title of *restitutor monetæ*, indicate a reform which justifies the statement of Dion. There is, besides, in the Collection of Vienna, a plated *aureus* of Caracalla. (Eckhel, i. p. 115.) The obligation to pay the impost in gold also dates probably from this time; at least, it appears established under Elagabalus. (Hist. Aug., *Alex.*, 38.) One-half upon discharges had moreover always been paid in this manner, *aurum vicesimarium* (Livy, xxvii. 10).

[3] *In orbe Romano qui sunt, ex const. imp. Antonin. cives romani effecti sunt* (Ulpian, in the *Digest*, i. 5, 17; *Novell. Justin.*, lxxviii. 5).

[4] That is to say, one-twentieth of the manumissions, legacies, and donations. Dion, lxxix. 9, and this work, vol. iii. p. 743; vol. iv. p. 14. Nor were the provincials subjected to the requirements of the laws in respect to their inheritances; he took away the *caduca* from the public treasury, *ærarium*, to assign them to the *fiscus*, or treasury of the prince: *Omnia caduca fisco vindicantur, servato jure antiquo liberis et parentibus* (Ulpian, *Reg.*, xvii. 2).

to all the provinces the benefit of the Roman laws, and consequently the right of appeal to the emperor, did not modify the ancient categories of cities: free cities, federated, Latin colonies and those of Italic right, etc., which subsisted long after. Caracalla himself made new ones: he granted the *jus Italicum* to the inhabitants of Antioch and Emesa.[1] One of these persistent distinctions was however effaced: he admitted Alexandrians into the senate of Rome, which had up to that time been closed against them.

Nor was the status of persons modified by this measure. The condition of the slave, the colonist, the freedman, the foreigner established in the Empire or enrolled in its auxiliary troops, remained the same:[2] there were merely additional imposts and a new class of aliens. But a numerous class of citizens gained a great deal by the decree of Caracalla. The custom of gratuitous distributions was extended to all the cities possessing the right of Roman citizenship. They had held it in honour to imitate the charitable institution of their metropolis, and we have found, even in Palmyra, which became an Italic colony, tesseræ for the distribution of grain.[3] When there were none but citizens in the Empire, the poor of the provincial cities participated in the benefit of the public aid. S. Augustine sees only this result of the edict, and it seems to him a very happy one. "This was," says he, "an excellent and very humane measure, for it enabled the common people, destitute of land, to obtain supplies furnished by the common fund."[4] When Maximin took possession of the municipal funds, it is noticed that he seized even the money that served to pay for the distributions of grain.[5]

Some of these jurisconsults who wrote: "Food must be given to the poor," doubtless foresaw that the decree would have this

[1] *Digest*, l. 15.

[2] Diocletian gave later, in 298, the right of citizenship to sons of veterans born of foreign mothers, *peregrini juris feminas*, *C. I. L.*, iii. p. 900. The capitulated, the Junian Latins, those whom a condemnation deprived of the right of citizenship, foreigners established, willingly or by force, in the Empire or serving in its troops, perhaps the inhabitants of countries united to the Empire after Caracalla, these formed a new class of aliens, placed between the *cives* and the *barbari*. Cf. Accarias, *Précis de droit romain*, i. p. 94, and Madvig, *l'État romain*, p. 36.

[3] See above, p. 84, the proof of the extension of this custom.

[4] . . . . *gratissime atque humanissime factum est, ut* . . . . *plebs illa, quæ suos agros non haberet, de publico viveret* (*de Civit. Dei*, v. 17).

[5] Herod., vii. 3.

merit; but not so Caracalla, though, like his father, he was very liberal in the distribution of provisions. The determining motive for him was the fiscal reason, for his need of money was extreme. The immense treasure left by Severus had been quickly dissipated. "Nothing more remains to us," said the prudent Julia one day to him, as she vainly attempted to instil a little order into these prodigalities and into this deranged brain; "just or unjust, all our revenues are exhausted." "Have good courage, mother; so long as we have this, money shall not be lacking;" as he spoke he patted his sword.

Caracalla crowned with Laurel and wearing the Ægis.[1]

His own was not to be greatly feared, but he had that of his soldiers. Severus had held them in restraint: his son gave them loose rein. He put in practice the maxim attributed to his father: "Make the soldiers content and laugh at the rest." His innumerable victims had left behind them relatives and friends who might avenge them. All, therefore, were hostile to him, except those to whom he said: "It is for you that I reign; my treasures are yours." And they might well believe it, seeing themselves daily gorged with gold. Their yearly pay was increased seventy millions of drachmas,[2] which the ordinary revenues of the State were no longer sufficient to pay. He adopted another measure, disastrous to discipline. The legions dwelt in camp the whole year under tents; he allowed them to take up their winter quarters in the neighbouring cities,[3] which they treated as conquered

[1] Cameo No. 251 of the *Cabinet de France*. Sardonyx of three layers, $1\frac{5}{10}$ in. by $1\frac{1}{4}$. Portrait bearing very slight resemblance—[except to that above, p. 240.—*Ed.*].

[2] Dion, lxxviii. 36; cf. lxxvii. 24, where the figures for the augmentation of the ἆθλα τῆς στρατιᾶς are probably inverted.

[3] lxxviii. 3.

Eumeli del. Dosso pinxit — Imp. Fraillery. — Dambourgez chromolith

TREASURE FROM TARSIS

GOLD COINS OF ALEXANDER, PHILLIPP II AND HERCULES ENGRAVED DURING THE REIGN OF ALEXANDER SEVERUS

countries, ruining their hosts, and themselves losing, in a life of debauchery, what warlike qualities remained to them.

One thing which the mercenary soldier, without a country, as the Roman soldier had now become, loves as much as gold, is war, that intoxicating game of life and death, in which he always hopes to win; the licence of an army on an expedition and the glutting of brutal passions, disguised by a halo of glory. Caracalla had promised to lead them to this chase of men and booty: "I wish to end life in war," said he; "it is a fine death;"[1] and he had continually on his lips a name long held up by the Greeks in opposition to the most glorious names of Rome, that of Alexander. At the epoch of Polybius, his compatriots avenged themselves for their recent defeat by saying to the Romans: "It is to Fortune that you owe your successes; Alexander owed his to his genius." Later, they again repeated: "The Parthians, whom you have been unable to vanquish, were but the smallest of the peoples subjugated by him." Thus the remembrance of the hero of the Hellenic race took possession of the mind of Cæsar and of Trajan. These great captains would have been glad to repeat his conquests, to establish their legionaries in the cities built by his veterans on the banks of the Oxus, and they would have deemed the Roman Empire complete had they given it for its Eastern limit that of the Macedonian empire. But as the old spirit of Rome gave way before the advancing encroachments of Hellenism, Alexander ceased to be a rival and became a fellow-citizen, whose glory now formed part of the national glory. He was raised to a place of dignity: he came to be a god, and the terrible soldier was transformed into a beneficent genius who warded off disastrous influences, ἀλεξίκακος. Medals of gold and silver, stamped with his likeness, served as talismans. "They protect," says a writer of the *Augustan History*,[2] "in every act of their lives,

Alexander the Great; Talismanic Medal in Gold.

Talismanic Medal in Silver with the Name of Alexander. ΑΛΕΞ-ΑΝΔΡΟΥ.

Medal of Alexander on a Sword-belt and serving for a Talisman. (*Dic. des Antiq.*, fig. 314.)

[1] Dion, lxxvii. 3.

[2] *Tyr. trig.*, 14.

those who wear them." Caracalla did more: he pretended that the soul of the hero had passed into his own,[1] and to prove it he trained war-elephants and organized a Macedonian phalanx.[2] The latter creation, however, was less a passion for imitation than the completion of a reform commenced long before. Instead of regular armies to be fought with scientific tactics, the Romans now had to repulse the impetuous attacks of unorganized barbarians and the fleet cavaliers of Parthia. Before the elephants and the phalanx of Pyrrhus[3] they had abandoned their ancient order of battle in close order and dense columns. Their adversaries changing, they resumed it, so that the individual fury might break against an impenetrable mass. This reform had begun in the wars in Britain;[4] later, Arrian[5] had distinctly established the principle of the formation in phalanx of eight men deep without interval, with a ninth line of archers, the cavalry and military engines in the rear and on the wings. This will hereafter be the disposition of the legions.

Toward the end of the year 212 Caracalla went to Gaul. He caused the governor of Gallia Narbonensis to be put to death, and disturbed these provinces by violating we know not what rights of cities, perhaps the rights of those who refused the onerous gift of the *jus civitatis*. A serious malady, and doubtless also a desire to inspect the defences of the Rhine, detained him on this side of the Alps. In February, 213, he was back again in his capital,[6] which he beheld for the last time.

He had promised his soldiers expeditions, and the Empire had need to strike some blow in the direction of the Danube and the Rhine, where were forming some powerful confederations, which we shall study later. One of these, that of the Alemanni, who make their appearance then for the first time, surprised the passage of the fortified line which covered the *agri Decumates*, and a large body of cavalry bore conflagration and death into this outpost of

[1] Dion, lxxvii. 7–8. He was called *φιλαλεξανδρότατος*.

[2] [Neither of which ever won a victory for Alexander.—*Ed.*]

[3] This change was anterior to Pyrrhus; but the new organization was consolidated and improved in this war. See, in our first volume, the reforms of Camillus and the creation of the legion.

[4] Under Paulinus and Agricola. (Tac., *Agric.*, 35; Dion, lxii. 8.)

[5] In 136, *Acies*, 15.

[6] We have in the *Code*, vii. 16, 2, a rescript dated from Rome, February 5th, 213. But there may be an error in this date. Cf. Eckhel, vii. pp. 210, 211.

Italy and Gaul. Before the end of 213 [1] Caracalla led his troops against the invaders and vanquished them on the banks of the Main, where their women renewed the acts of heroic ferocity which Plutarch attributes to the women of the Cimbri, unless the account of Xiphilin be a classical reminiscence. There is some question about other successes in the direction of Rhætia. The Osrhoenian archers, who formed part of the Roman army, had the honour of the campaign; which leads us to suppose that the enemy were neither very numerous nor very terrible.[2] Meanwhile the report of these successes resounded afar: peoples established at the mouths of the Elbe and on the North Sea sent deputations to the emperor to request his friendship and subsidies, which he granted.[3] The Alemanni, rendered prudent by their defeat, kept quiet for twenty years. Dion accuses the emperor of having thus purchased peace from the Germans. We have several times explained that it was good policy to win over the barbarian chiefs by presents, to avoid sudden irruptions and the useless wars which they entailed. There is then no occasion to blame Caracalla for having pursued this course, at least if he did not purchase this peace too dearly.[5] It enabled him to levy, amongst the Alemanni, auxiliary corps, one of which formed his body-guard. We should even be reduced to praising his conduct towards the army, if we did not see in it popularity-hunting and base flattery. He shared all the fatigues of his soldiers. Was it necessary to excavate a ditch, build a bridge, construct a roadway, do some laborious work: he

Caracalla Germanicus.[4]

[1] At least we possess coins of this year, on which he bears the name of Germanicus. (See above, and Eckhel, vii. 210, 222. Cf. Or.-Henzen, No. 5,507.)

[2] These archers, who were unknown to the ancient legions, assumed daily more importance in the army, where a certain number of soldiers of this kind were necessary, for General De Reffye has demonstrated that an arrow still has good effect at 130 and 140 yards. It was not a weapon with which a battle might be won, but it was a missile very useful at a certain moment of action.

[3] Dion, lxxvii. 14.

[4] ANTONINVS PIVS AVG. GERM., around the head of Caracalla wreathed with laurel. On the reverse, Serapis standing, and the legend: P. M. TR. P. XXI COS. IIII PP. Coin of silver; Cohen, No. 143. For the name of Antoninus assumed by Caracalla, see above, p. 240, n. 3.

[5] Macrinus, his murderer, it is true, accuses him of having dispensed as much in pensions to the barbarians as for the pay of the army; this is absurd. (Dion, lxxviii. 17.)

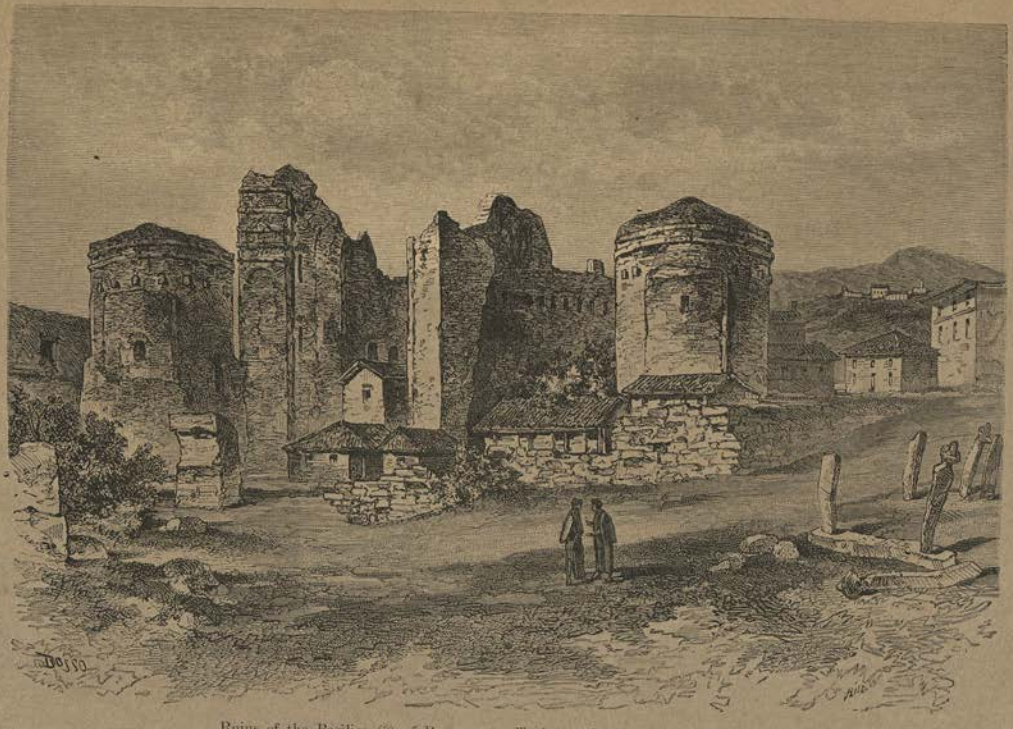
was the first to set the example. He had the commonest dishes served up for him, eating and drinking from wooden bowls; he shared the coarse bread of the troops; oftentimes he himself crushed his portion of wheat, kneaded the dough into a loaf and placed it in the oven. He dressed like the poorest soldiers: hence they called him their comrade, and he was extremely proud of it. He rarely went in a litter or on horseback; he carried his arms, and sometimes even the ensigns laden with ornaments of gold, the weight of which caused the most robust centurions to sink under it.[1] Hadrian, marching with bared head in front of his legions, was a general always obeyed; Caracalla, kneading his bread, is grotesque and destroys discipline by losing the respect of his soldiers.

A Tempest (after the Virgil of the Vatican).

They tell us still of barbarians massacred by treason, of a king of the Quadi whom he caused to be put to death, of a war which, according to the wish of Tacitus, he kindled between the Vandals and the Marcomanni, of successes against the Sarmatians in Dacia and against the Goths, whose name then appears for the first time.[2] This is much obscurity about all this, but it reveals an intention of rendering secure the northern frontier of the Empire. "After having reorganized the army of the Danube," says Herodian, "he passed into Thrace and there made numerous regulations for the cities," as he had already done in Gaul, and as he was about to do in Asia. What the regulations were we have no knowledge;

[1] Herod., iv. 7. Dion agrees with him.

[2] They were scouts preceding the body of the Gothic nation, which was then approaching from the Euxine, but had not yet arrived, unless it be necessary to transform these Goths of Caracalla into Getæ who inhabited both sides of the Danube. Dion (lxvii. 6) gives this name to the unsubjected Dacians.



Ruins of the Basilica (?) of Pergamus. (Texier, *Asie Mineure*, vol. ii. pl. 117.)

but the fact is to be noted, for, having doubtless been conceived in a spirit contrary to the local liberties, they must have hastened the hour when these liberties disappeared.

He crossed the Hellespont, nearly perishing in a tempest, and repaired to Pergamus, in order to get Æsculapius to heal him of his secret infirmity. He submitted to all the prescriptions then in use for wonderful cures. A miracle would this time have been of importance and of excellent profit, but it could not be effected by ordinary procedures: the emperor was too much in public. The god turned a deaf ear and Caracalla retained his disease.[1] At Troy he crowned with flowers the tomb of Achilles and desired that he also might have a Patroclus. His freedman Festus was chosen to play the dangerous part of friend to the hero. The new Patroclus in fact died some days afterwards, which gave the prince an opportunity to repeat the funeral scenes described by Homer: Festus had been poisoned for this performance.

Coin of Pergamus, with the Effigies of Æsculapius, Hygieia, and Telesphorus.

He passed the winter of 214–215 at Nicomedia, where Dion, our principal guide for this history, was with him. The Parthians were then wasting in internal feuds the last remnant of their life: the occasion was propitious for attacking them. He arrogantly reclaimed from them two refugees whom they immediately gave up, and this docility took away for the moment all pretext for war. Meanwhile victories were necessary to him. The king of Osrhoene governed his country for the benefit of Rome. Edessa, its principal city, situated on the route of caravans, at the foot of a cliff which bore the acropolis and from which issued an abundant supply of water, was and still is an important stategic point, the centre of defence for Upper Mesopotamia. This king had entered into compromising relations with the Persians: what these were is not known. Along this remote frontier friendships were fluctuating. Caracalla resolved to

[1] At this visit, Pergamus at least gained great privileges, which Macrinus revoked. Texier has found in all Asia Minor the ruins of only two amphitheatres, at Cyzicus and Pergamus, vol. ii. p. 227. The amphitheatre at Pergamus is very small, 184 by 121 feet. The waters of the stream which flows across it could be stopped for nautical games, crocodile combats, or nymphs playing on marine shells, as Martial indicates, *de Spectac.*, 26.

suppress this tributary state: he persuaded the king to come and meet him, cast him into prison, and made a Roman colony of his capital. The affair was insignificant, but the suppression of an oriental king always occasioned more clamour than in the West, and then Abgarus probably had a well-filled treasury.[1] Caracalla employed the same method of procedure with respect to the king of Armenia, then at variance with his son. He invited them to choose him as arbiter, and when they had come he treated them as he had the king of Osrhoene. But the Armenians did not allow themselves to be captured so easily as their prince: they destroyed a Roman army sent against them.

The senators, whom Caracalla reproached for their idleness, while he was exposing himself in their behalf to fatigues and dangers, naturally applauded these lofty exploits. The surname *Parthicus* was decreed to him, and they terminated all the acclamations in his honour by the wish that his reign might endure a hundred years. He did not feel himself to be less odious, and wrote to them from Antioch: "I know that my exploits are displeasing to you; but I have arms and soldiers. So I am not disturbed by what you think."

In Antioch, he had come in search of pleasures;[2] in Alexandria, where he arrived at the end of the autumn of 215,[3] he sought for vengeance. The Alexandrians, a frivolous and jeering race, gave to Julia the surname of Jocasta, the incestuous spouse of her son, the mother of two hostile brothers; they called Caracalla the very great Getic, *maximus Geticus*, a cutting allusion to an exploit which had not been accomplished in the country of the Getæ, and they laughed at this ugly man, undersized and bald, old before his time, who pretended to act the great heroes, Achilles and Alexander. These doings were reported to the

[1] This suppression did not last long, for we afterwards find kings at Edessa. The suppressed dynasties sometimes were converted into Roman functionaries. A descendant of Herod was proconsul of Asia about 135, and a Julius Antiochus, of the royal race of Commagene, was consul and one of the Arval Brothers. (*Bull. de corr. Hellén.*, 1882, p. 291.) At the other extremity of the Empire, the country of the Gallaeci and the Asturians was separated, in 215, from Hispania Citerior. This was merely a dismemberment of a province. (*C. I. L.*, vol. ii., 2,661.)

[2] *Antiochenses colonos fecit salvis tributis* (*Digest.*, l. 15, 8, § 5). He granted to them, as also to the Byzantines, *jura vetusta*. (Spart., *Car.*, 1.)

[3] Eckhel, iii. 215.

emperor. When he approached the city the most prominent citizens went forth to meet him, bearing in their hands the sacred objects, as if their gods wished to do honour to the new god who was coming. Caracalla received them well, and, in derision of the old and sacred laws of hospitality, he made them sit at his table, and then, at the termination of the feast, ordered them to be put to death. During the execution the soldiers seized their arms and

Caracalla as a Warrior.[1]

Caracalla as an Apple-seller.[1]

rushed into the city. The squares, the principal streets, the chief edifices, were occupied; he himself took his station in the temple of Serapis and from there organized the massacre. The slaughter continued through many days, without distinction of age, condition, or sex. What was the number of the victims? Immense, for Alexandria was an ant-hill of men and an opulent city, where the soldier struck at random and pillaged in security. The temples even, those sacred banks in which private persons often deposited their riches, were not spared. The carnage ceased only when, from

[1] Grotesque statuettes of the Museum of Avignon. (Ch. Lenormant, *Nouveaux Mémoires.*)

weariness and disgust, the sword dropped from the hand of the murderers, sated with blood and booty.

In announcing this exploit to the senate, "the Ausonian monster" said: "As to the quantity and quality of those who have perished, it matters little, for they all merited the same fate.[1] The public conscience was perhaps in secret indignant; but, officially, the senators commemorated this new species of victory by a coin representing the prince trampling Egypt under his feet.

Caracalla trampling Egypt under his Feet.[2]

Caracalla then resumed his ideas of conquest (216). He sent to demand of the king of the Parthians the hand of his daughter, and on his refusal, crossed the Tigris, captured Arbela, where he flung to the winds the ashes of the kings, and ravaged a part of Media. The enemy, astonished at this sudden aggression, had offered no resistance. After this easy success the emperor returned to Mesopotamia and went into winter-quarters in Edessa to consult there the oracle of the god Lunus; but while he was seeking the future he lost the present: on his way to Carrhæ he was slain by one of those men whose appetites he had inordinately aroused—a soldier discontented at not having been appointed centurion. This occurred April 8, 217, when he was barely twenty-nine years old.[3]

Coin commemorative of the Victory of Caracalla over the Parthians (*Victoria Parthica Maxima*). *Aureus* struck in the year 217.

The Romans had divinities whom they called "the Terrible," *Diræ*, avenging powers which always exist for princes, for expiation always follows great crimes and ends by overtaking those who have committed them, or their posterity.

Julia Domna was then at Antioch. Up to the last hour of Caracalla she had possessed supreme power, but she had also endured supreme anguish: during a quarter of a century the Roman world

[1] Dion, lxxvii. 22, whom I follow always in preference to Herodian.

[2] PM. TR. P. XVIII IMP. III COS. IIII PP. SC. Caracalla trampling under foot a crocodile, symbol of Egypt, and receiving two ears of corn from the hands of Africa. Large bronze. Cohen, No. 474.

[3] Zosimus does not believe that Caracalla was killed by Macrinus: "The author of his death," he says, "was never known." Herodian (iv. 12) gives us to understand that there was a conspiracy among the chiefs of the army, and Spartian affirms it (*Carac.*, 6).

at her feet, then her husband dead, one of her sons slaughtered, and now the other also had fallen under the blows of an assassin, involving in his downfall the ruin of her house. Too proud to submit to the condition of a subject under some adventurer whom her family had raised from nothing, and to become, after so much grandeur, the object of public pity, she resolved to escape from her distress like a Stoic of ancient days. And, besides, she suffered from a malady perhaps incurable; death was approaching her: she went to meet it, and allowed herself to die of starvation.[1]

The God Lunus.[2]

Caracalla had constructed at Rome a portico on which were

Caracalla offering to Mars a Victory.[3]

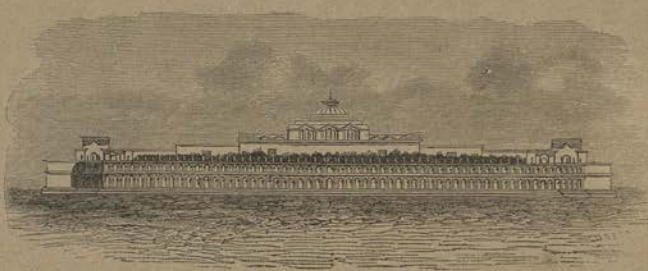
engraved the exploits of his father, and thermæ which are, after

[1] According to Herodian (iv. 13) she killed herself through despair or in obedience to a secret order.

[2] Gem of the *Cabinet de France*, No. 2,033.

[3] Gem of the *Cabinet de France*, No. 2,103. (Agate, $\frac{7}{10}$ in. by $1\frac{5}{16}$ in.) Caracalla seated, half nude like Jupiter, holds in one hand a horn of plenty and with the other presents

the Coliseum, the grandest ruin in Rome and one of the largest in the world.[1] A colonnade, running round a perimeter of 4,750 feet, formed an inclosure behind which extended gardens planted with trees, lawns, and flowers, with a stadium reserved for gymnastic games, which Roman hygiene prescribed after the bath. The thermæ themselves, an edifice 750 feet long by 500 in width, inclosed a theatre, halls for declamation or study, courts with porticos for a promenade, museums, and libraries; finally, an immense reservoir surrounded with 1,600 seats of sculptured marble, and in which 3,000 persons could bathe at once. In the centre of



Thermæ of Caracalla. (Restoration by Blouet.—École des Beaux-Arts.)

this colossal construction rose the *cella Soliaris*, covered with a flat dome, which was the despair of the architects of the time and is still the astonishment of ours.[2] Everywhere the choicest marbles, the most beautiful mosaics, and the master-pieces of art. From it have been taken the Hercules of Glycon, the Flora, and the magnificent group of Dirce, known under the name of the Farnese Bull. A single column of these thermæ has appeared sufficient to decorate the square *della Santa Trinità* at Florence, and the Museum of Naples is filled with sculptures brought from these ruins, the last and supreme effort of Roman art. Spartian thinks that the

a Victory to a statue of Mars. On the exergue: MAR(ti) VIC(tori). (Chabouillet, *op. cit.*, p. 274.)

[1] He had not time to complete these thermæ; the external colonnade was constructed by Elagabalus and completed by Alexander Severus. (Lampridius, *Heliog.*, 17, and *Alex.*, 25.) On the thermæ of the Romans, see vol. iv. p. 220.

[2] [It has been shown by Mr. Middleton, in his *Ancient Rome in* 1885, that this roof was no arch, but a solid mass of concrete, cast in this shape, and laid on like a metal lid.—*Ed.*]

Interior of a Hall of the Thermæ of Caracalla. (Present condition.)

street which lead to the Thermæ of Caracalla, constructed by this prince, was the finest in Rome.

In Syria, he had continued the labours of his father; at

Fragment of Mosaic from the Thermæ of Caracalla. (Casing of the Upper Story.)

Baalbec, the great vestibule and the *temenos* of the temple of Jupiter were built by him.

These works of art will not save his memory. He had scarcely reigned six years, and this short time had been sufficient to do irreparable damage. Under Commodus, Pertinax, and Julianus, the

soldiery had been insolent; under Caracalla it actually took possession of the Empire. Accustomed to see this prince defer in everything to their caprices, they desire this *régime* which was so profitable

Flora, called the Flora Farnese. (Colossal Statue found at the Thermæ of Caracalla.)

to endure, and to succeed in this they determined to choose emperors who would not be in a condition to change it.

II.—Macrinus (April 12, 217—June 8, 218); Elagabalus (June 8, 218—March 11, 222).

Macrinus (*Marcus Opellius Macrinus*) was an African, like Severus, and a native of *Cæsarea*, the Cherchell of the French colony in Algiers. He was of humble origin. It was said that he

had been a slave and a gladiator; we know that he was procurator of the property of Plautianus, and that he barely escaped perishing with him. Severus took into his service this confidential agent of his old friend and made him superintendent of the post-service of the Flaminian Way. Caracalla, forgetting who had been his first protector, appointed him advocate of the fiscus, and later, prefect of the prætorium. He was a mild and just man, without talent or ambition, who never would have dreamed of empire had not a letter denouncing him fallen into his hands.[1] To escape certain death he caused the prince to be slain, and his accomplice having been instantly massacred by the guards, the part which he had played in the murder was not at first known. He pretended to feel great sorrow, which won the soldiers; on the fourth day he was proclaimed emperor, being as yet only a mere knight.[2] We see how everything is becoming debased, even the imperial dignity.

Diadumenianus Antoninus, Cæsar and Prince of Youth.[3]

His son *Diadumenianus*, then in his ninth year, became Cæsar and Prince of Youth (April, 12, 217).

The new emperor did not dare to have Caracalla declared a public enemy. His ashes were borne secretly to the tomb of the Antonines, and that his images might disappear quietly, a decree sent to the mint all the statues of silver and gold. But he received divine honours. A temple and pontiffs were consecrated to him. The soldiers did not agree that their favourite emperor should be deprived of an apotheosis.

[1] Capitolinus is very much opposed to him, but Dion, his contemporary, says too much in his favour out of hatred to Caracalla (lxxviii. 40). Herodian speaks also of his severity (v. 2).

[2] Herodian (v. 1) and Dion (lxxviii. 14). He had, however, received the consular ornaments (Dion, *ibid.*, 13), which had assured him the title of *clarissimus*. (Or.-Henzen, 5,512.) Cf. Lampridius, *Alex.*, 21.

[3] M. OPEL. ANTONINVS DIADVMENIANVS CÆS., around the head of the young prince. On the reverse, PRINC. IVVENTVTIS S.C., Diadumenianus standing, holding an ensign and a sceptre. At his left, two ensigns. Lampridius (*Diad.*, 2) has preserved these words of Macrinus, showing that to the ordinary *donativum* were added promotions, which redoubled the interest that the soldiers had in multiplying the vacancies of the throne and the imperial adoptions: *Habete, commilitones, pro imperio ternos, pro Antonini nomine aureos quinos et solitas promotiones, sed geminatas.*

As the conqueror of Niger had pretended to continue the house of the Antonines, Macrinus wished to attach himself to the African dynasty, without however claiming all the inheritance. He assumed the name of Severus, and gave to Diadumenianus that of Antoninus, which his victim had borne. It was a bit of flattery to those crowds who are always captivated by words and appearances: Horace has an expression like this.[1] For the rest, Macrinus applied himself to winning everybody: the senate by tokens of regard, the soldiers with money, the people by the suppression of recent imposts, the public feeling by the recall of the proscribed and the punishment of delators; but all this was done by degrees, and nowhere was felt the firm hand of a man capable of imposing his will.

Apotheosis of Caracalla.[2]

The king of the Parthians had invaded Mesopotamia with a large army. Macrinus, obliged to lead against him troops lacking discipline and ardour for this war, experienced repulses which the enemy were not able however to turn into defeats. The Romans, masters of the cities and of numerous strong castles, in which they had had time to collect all the provisions, left the plain to the enemy's cavalry, who could not subsist there. The two princes soon wearied of a struggle in which neither of them was heartily engaged. Macrinus, besides, was in haste to return to Rome; he made humble proposals, released the prisoners, and gave 15,000,000 drachmas, with which Artabanus was satisfied.[4] He again humiliated himself before the Armenians, restored to their king Tiridates his mother, whom Caracalla had retained in captivity, the lands which his father had possessed in Cappadocia, and probably a pension, in consideration of which the Armenian consented to receive the gold crown which Macrinus sent him as a

Reverse of a Coin of Macrinus.[3]

[1] . . . . *qui stupet in titulis et imaginibus* (*Sat.*, I. vi. 17).

[2] CONSECRATIO. S.C. Caracalla in a four-horse chariot, on a funeral pile of three stories. (Large bronze struck after the death of Caracalla. Cohen, No. 396.)

[3] PONTIF. MAX. TR. P. II. COS. PP. S. C. Felicitas standing, holding a caduceus and a horn of plenty. (Large bronze. Cohen, No. 92.)

[4] Dion, lxxviii. 27.

sign of sovereignty. In Dacia hostages were also restored to the barbarians. Under Caracalla, the Empire had maintained, at least in the face of the enemy, the proud bearing which Severus had given it.

The success of the Roman arms was not the less celebrated on

Diadumenianus.[1] (Bust of the Capitol.)

account of these events. The coins were like an official journal of the time, and quite as unreliable as certain bulletins of victories; one of them, which the senate ordered to be struck, bore the words: *Victoria Parthica.*[2]

[1] The cuirass and the cloak of this marble bust are of alabaster. (Capitol, Hall of the Emperors, No. 57.)

[2] Eckhel, vii. 258.

Yet Macrinus undertook to draw closer the bonds of discipline, so lax under Caracalla, and while leaving to the veterans the increase of pay, the rewards and exemptions from service which had been lavished upon them, he pretended to submit the recruits to the regulations of Severus,[1] and treated them all with extreme severity. A victor might have done this with success; a half-conquered prince, and one who had purchased a peace, was incapable of imposing this reform. The war had called many troops into Syria: he made the mistake of keeping them there. These inactive soldiers, their minds still full of the memories of the great expeditions of Severus, began to reckon up the profits that had accrued to them from the victories of the father and the donatives of the son, and to make between what was and what had been that comparison which the disaffected always turn to the disadvantage of the present. Macrinus had written to the Conscript Fathers that he intended to do nothing without them,[3] that is to say, that he was going to restore to

Macrinus.[2] (Statue of the Vatican.)

[1] Dion, lxxviii. 28. According to Capitolinus (*Macr.*, 12), he condemned adulterers to be burned, *junctis corporibus:* fugitive slaves to fight as gladiators; delators, if they failed to prove the accusation, forfeited their heads; if they proved it, they were branded with infamy after having received the sum which the law allowed them; he condemned soldiers to the cross or had other servile punishments inflicted upon them; he often "decimated" them. I doubt whether he could have been capable of so much energy. Yet Herodian (v. 2) confirms the words of Capitolinus.

[2] Statue of heroic size in Greek marble, which has preserved its antique head. (*Museo Pio Clem.*, vol. iii. pl. 12.)

[3] In the letter which Macrinus wrote to the senate to announce the revolt of Elagabalus,

the senate the centre of the Empire, which the last prince had placed in the army. This should have been done and nothing said about it; especially he should have sent back to their respective

Macrinus. (Bust of the Capitol, Hall of the Emperors, No. 55.)

garrisons the legions which were useless in the pacified East, and not have passed his life in Antioch gazing at dancers and listening to buffoons. Soon complaints were openly made in the camps, of the parsimony of the new prince, of this lawyer who kept the soldier in his tent, while not long before cities had been his

he complained of the insatiable greed of the soldiers and of the impossibility of his being able to provide, with the ordinary revenues of the State, for the payment of the soldiers' wages, at the rate to which Caracalla had raised them.

quarters. They spoke of the millions given up to the Parthians as of property taken from the legions, and they went so far as to believe that the murderer of the prince who was so dear to the army was Macrinus.

After the death of Julia Domna, Macrinus had relegated to Emesa the sister of that empress, Mæsa, with her two daughters, Soæmias, mother of Avitus Bassianus, so notorious under the name of Elagabalus, and Mammæa, whose son, born in an old Canaanite city where the Venus of Libanus was adored,[1] had taken from a temple of that city consecrated to Alexander the name of the Macedonian hero. It seems that these Syrian women, who were very intelligent, had made profitable marriages by taking husbands who possessed fortunes as well as years; at least, they both were already widows and rich. They had also made skilful use of their imperial connections, and, in 217, what remained of the family of the priest Bassianus, three women and two children,[2] were now united near the temple of the Sun. This sanctuary, in great veneration throughout all Syria, possessed the right of asylum;[3] it afforded shelter for their wealth and their persons. Macrinus, a timorous usurper, lacking the audacity which sometimes renders usurpation successful, left in the hands of his enemies all this gold—a sure means, in such a time, to bring about a revolution. Another imprudence was, that he sent a legion to camp in the vicinity of this treasure to which Mæsa and her daughters had the key, and near a city which, owing to Caracalla the title and privileges of an Italic colony, venerated his memory and his race.[4]

Julia Mæsa. (Gold Coin.)

These three women, without counsellors, without support, undertook from the remoteness of their Syrian city to overthrow an emperor, and they overthrew him.

They had consecrated the elder of the children to the priesthood of the god of Emesa, hereditary in the family of Bassianus; they had him circumcised, in conformity with the custom of

[1] *Arca Cæsarea* or *Cæsarea-Libanis*. Cf. Belley, *Mém. de l'Acad. des inscr.*, vol. xxxii. pp. 685 *et seq.*

[2] Soæmias had had a second son. (Orelli, No. 946, and Bœckh, *C. I. G.*, No. 6,027.)

[3] Lamprid., *Heliog.*, 2.

[4] *Digest*, l. 15, 1, § 4.

the country, and forbade him to eat pork. They themselves strove to produce an effect on the minds of the people by an affected or sincere devotion. An inscription gives to Mæsa the title of "very holy;"[1] coins of Soæmias represent her under the features of the Venus Celestia,[2] and Mammæa, through religious curiosity and political precaution, had entered into correspondence with Origen.[3] There were many Christians and Jews in this region, whom these advances might win, without alarming the pagans. Then, as to-day, these sensual and impressionable populations suffered themselves to be deceived by the outward appearance of sanctity. In the East, marabouts who make use of religion for political ends are of all times. The three women caused this part to be played by the child in whom were centred their affections and their hopes.

Elagabalus, on a Coin of Tralles.[6]

Varius Avitus Bassianus, better known under the name of his god Elagabalus,[4] was then in his fourteenth year;[5] he had that plastic beauty which the Greeks regard as a gift from the gods; and when clad in a robe of purple embroidered with gold, his head encircled with a crown of precious stones whose iridescence sparkled like a luminous aureole about his brow, he ascended to the temple to fulfil the sacred rites, the crowd believed they beheld a child of destiny. The soldiers encamped in the suburbs of the city often came to this renowned sanctuary, and, yet more than the others, admired and loved the young pontiff, whom Severus had cradled upon his knees. Gradually the report spread that Elagabalus was more nearly connected with him who had been the real emperor of the soldiers. Servants of the palace

[1] *Sanctissima* (Henzen, No. 5,515).

[2] Eckhel, vii. 265. See above, p. 121, a statue, and p. 122, a coin of Soæmias, *Venus Celestia*.

[3] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, vi. 21. We must not in this fact see a leaning towards Christianity, for all the coins of Mammæa are pagan.

[4] The name Elagabalus is never found on coins, any more than that of Caligula and Caracalla. These surnames have passed into history from the mouth of the people. His official name was *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*.

[5] Herod., v. 3. Lampridius assigns him three years more (and the same to Alexander Severus), but Dion represents him as being yet a child, παιδίον (lxxviii. 36 and 38), and makes him die at 18 (lxxix. 20).

[6] Large bronze, the reverse of which we have given in vol. iv. p. 69.

of Emesa said he was the son of Caracalla,[1] and the money distributed, the promises made and hopes given, easily persuaded people who had an interest in being persuaded. For the success of this intrigue, Mæsa sacrificed her gold, Soæmias her honour; but neither of them cared for what they lost. The gold of Mæsa was placed at high interest, and Soæmias thought that the mantle of an empress would cover all.[2] As for the soldiers, they demanded nothing more to give to an effeminate Syrian the Empire of Augustus and Trajan.

One night Elagabalus repaired to the camp of Emesa, followed by wagons which bore the ransom of the Empire, and when day dawned he was proclaimed. They gave to him the names of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (May 16, 218): a last tribute to those Antonines whose renown even then was magnified by remoteness, and whom the poets of the time ranked above the gods.[3]

The God of Emesa.

A prefect of the prætorium, Ulpius Julianus, happened to be in the vicinity, with a troop of Moorish cavaliers whom he believed to be devoted to Macrinus their compatriot. He hastened to the camp to force its gates; the attack, feebly conducted, was not successful, and a second attempt met the same fate. So much was not needed to make the fidelity of his soldiers waver. When they heard a *cubicularius* of the last prince proclaim in the name of the new, that the property and the rank of the dead man should belong to him who would bring to the camp of Emesa the head of a centurion or a tribune; when they saw their comrades display from the top of the wall him whom they called the son of Caracalla and the bags of Mæsa's gold, they slew their officers, and the ensigns of the two armies united.

On a first report of the prefect, Macrinus had seen in this revolt only an outbreak of women, whom he would easily satisfy. Soon a messenger from the camp of Emesa arrived: "I bring you the head of Elagabalus," said he, and flung down that of Julianus.

[1] He assumed this title, which is found in the inscriptions: *divi Severi nepos, divi Antonini filius.*

[2] Lampridius (*Heliog.*, 2) accuses Soæmias of having led the life of a courtesan, *meretricis more vixit.*

[3] . . . . *Antoninos pluris fuisse quam deos* (Lamprid., *Diad.*, 7).

The sight of this bloody trophy which the rebels had sent him, the audacity of this soldier, who profited by the confusion to make his escape, caused anxiety in the heart of the prince, and he had

Elagabalus. (Bust of the Capitol, Hall of the Emperors, No. 57.)

recourse to what seemed the great measure of safety with soldiers. That he might have occasion to promise to each legionary 5,000 drachmas, of which 1,000 to be paid down, he conferred the title of Augustus on his son. The letter which announced to the senate

this elevation, promised to the Romans a congiary of 150 drachmas per head; from which we see that a soldier was then esteemed to to be worth thirty-three times as much as one of the sovereign people. He also re-established all the military regulations of Caracalla.

The largesses inspired by fear came too late; every day deserters made their way from all points of Syria, singly or in bands, to the camp of Emesa; the legion of Albano, which was encamped at Apamea, deserted in a body, so that the army of Elagabalus became strong enough to go in pursuit of that of Macrinus. The encounter took place on the confines of Syria and Phœnicia; the eunuch or servant of Mammæa, Gannys, who led the soldiers of the young Cæsar, happened to be a skilful man of war. He took up a good position, and Mæsa, Soæmias, and even Elagabalus, cast themselves into the fray to inspire their troops. Macrinus, on the contrary, frightened by the tumult and by new defections, fled, leaving his prætorians to maintain valiantly the reputation of the corps; but when they became aware of the cowardice of their chief and the promise of Elagabalus, that they should preserve their rank and honours, they laid down their arms, and the high-priest of the Sun found himself master of the Roman world. This occurred June 8, 218.[1]

Macrinus had sent in advance to Antioch an announcement of victory. When he arrived near this city he took a passport of the imperial post, cut off his hair and beard, and in disguise attempted in great haste to reach Byzantium and Europe. All went well at first, and he had crossed Asia Minor without opposition, when excess of fatigue and need of money obliged him to stop in a poor cottage in the outskirts of Chalcedon. A note written by him to an agent of the imperial finances to obtain funds led to his recognition; he was arrested and delivered up to the soldiers of Elagabalus, who had followed him from Antioch. He had charged trusty messengers to conduct his son to the Parthians, his recent allies. Horsemen overtook the child before he had passed the Euphrates and slew him. The news of his

[1] Is it in remembrance of this triumph that he founded in Palestine, on the site of Emmaüs, a city of victory, Nicopolis? (Eusebius, *Chron.*, *ad ann.* 224.) He made Emesa a colony possessing the *jus Italicum*. (*Digest*, l. 15, 8, § 6.)

death reached his father while he himself was being brought to the conqueror. He threw himself from the top of his chariot and

Ruins of Zana, the Ancient *Diana* (*Revue archéol.*, ninth volume).

fractured his shoulder; the soldiers finished him. He was fifty-four years old and had not reigned fourteen months.

No monument of him is known, but an arch of triumph still standing in French Algeria, at Zana, the ancient *Diana*, was raised to him by his compatriots of Mauretania.[1]

The God of Emesa.

He had, we are assured, a plan of making a revision of the imperial rescripts, which were most frequently only decisions in special cases, with a view to preserving only those which were of a general character. It was a laudable intention, which required time for its execution, and this was not granted him.[3]

The god of Emesa was represented by a black stone, which

[1] The inscription of the Arch of Zana (*Diana Veteranorum*), constructed directly after his accession, terms him *consul designatus*. Dion, in fact, informs us that Macrinus was not willing, as Plautianus had done (see p. 82), to reckon the consular ornaments which he had obtained from Caracalla as a first consulate. (L. Renier, *Mél. d'épigr.*, pp. 185 *et seq.*)

[2] *Aureus* of Uranius Antonius bearing the black stone richly ornamented and surmounted by a crown with points.

[3] He had also undertaken to continue the alimentary foundations established by Trajan and the Antonines. (Lamprid., *Diad.*, 2.)

no doubt had the same origin as the black stone of Mecca. The terrestrial influence of these two aerolites[1] was very different, for we may say that the one brought down from sidereal space a grand idea of religious purity, and the other the principle of all disorder. The Arabs relate that when creation was complete, God summoned the angels to contemplate the work emanating from his hands. At sight of it the choir of celestial spirits uttered a cry of adoration: "Allah!" This holy word, which proclaimed the unity and omnipotence of the Creator, God shut up in the heart of the black stone which Abraham deposited in the Kaaba. At the day of judgment it will open to disclose to view the divine formula in flaming characters, and to give testimony in behalf of those who have approached it with pure lips and a repentant heart.

Elagabalus in a Chariot drawn by Two Women.[2]

This legend is beautiful; it transforms an act of vulgar superstition into a profession of moral and religious faith. The stone of Emesa had more worldly grandeur, but infinitely less of virtue. It was the image of the Sun, from which it appeared to have come; and, as in all religions, the sign becomes easily confounded with the thing signified, it was venerated like the Sun itself, the author of life, the principle of fecundity and generation, which they adored by acts analogous to those which it accomplishes in the bosom of nature.[3]

Elagabalus was the most complete representation of the unclean side of this naturalism. Hitherto the tyrants of Rome had at least

[1] "In the temple . . . . one notices a great stone, rounded at the base and pointed at the top, of conical form and black in colour, which they say to have fallen from heaven." (Herod., v. 5.)

[2] Cameo of the *Cabinet de France*, No. 253 (white jasper, $1\frac{1}{35}$ in. by $\frac{85}{100}$ in.). This monument answers to the text of Lampridius: *junxit et quaternas mulieres pulcherrimas, et binas ad papillam, vel ternas et amplius, et sic vectatus est: sed plerumque nudus quum illum nudæ traherent.* The Greek inscription: *Long live Epixenus* (from ἐπίξενος, intruder), leads us to think that this cameo is a monument of a satirical nature.

[3] Asia was full of these conical stones. Venus at Paphos, Gacion at Seleucia (see vol. iv. p. 313) and at Bosra, were thus represented. These cones, of sidereal origin, symbolized the generative power: the two mountains named Casius, near Antioch and on the frontier of Egypt, owed this name to their pyramidal form. (Cf. Mionnet, *Séleucide et Piérie*, Nos. 891 *et seq.*, which give bronzes of Trajan representing a cone in a tetrastyle temple, with the legend, *Zeus Kasios*, and De Vogüé, *Inscr. sémitiques*, pp. 103–104.)

had something of the Roman character. In the son of Severus they had still found a soldier, the son of Soœmias was a pure Syrian, in whom united all that the East could produce of lascivious and shameful vices. His tastes turned to the most abominable life, his mind to the wildest aberrations. Hence he has ever remained in the memory of men as the symbol of enthroned infamy. Three things had produced this moral monstrosity: an impure religion, absolute power, and his youth.

After his victory Elagabalus assumed all the imperial titles, without awaiting the usual decree of the senate, and marched rapidly upon Antioch, which purchased exemption from pillage by the payment of 500 drachmas to each soldier. From there were despatched at once letters to the Conscript Fathers, in which he agreed to govern like Marcus Aurelius, and issued sentences of death against the governors who had been slow to divine his fortune, against senators who had shown too much zeal in favour of Macrinus, and even against the skilful man who had won for him the battle of Antioch.[1]

Each of the shocks which dethroned an emperor was succeeded by disorder, in which the Empire was painfully convulsed until a firm hand restored its equilibrium. The legions of Macrinus, sent to their cantonments, pillaged the villages along their route, and a great number of persons had visions of the imperial purple. They had just seen a simple knight come to imperial power, and now a child was mounting to it. There was then no more right nor constitution, no more senate nor Roman people, no more puissant aristocracy giving to Rome its Cæsars. "At the death of Nero," says Tacitus, "a terrible secret had been revealed, which was that emperors might be made outside Rome." At the accession

[1] Dion, lxxix. 3–4. One of the victims of Elagabalus, Valerianus Pætus, was condemned "because he had had portraits of himself made of gold, for the adornment of his mistresses." I point out this fact to indicate a Roman usage: the first act of an emperor was to coin gold pieces with his likeness upon them. To encroach on this right was a crime of majesty. Pætus was well aware of this, and was without doubt not so innocent as Dion says: "He was a Galatian," adds the historian; "they accused him of wishing to incite a rebellion in the neighbouring province, Cappadocia, and of having had coins struck with this intent, which were the cause of his death." This is the way all the usurpers began their career. Ammianus Marcellinus (xxvi. 7) relates that the partisans of the usurper Procopius brought about the defection of Illyria by circulating there pieces with his effigy, as proof that he was indeed the legitimate emperor.

of Elagabalus, another was taught them, which is, that it was not necessary to be elected by a powerful army, but that a few cohorts and shouts of the populace were sufficient to determine a revolution. Hence many persons fancied that with a little audacity it would be easy to force the gates of the palace. Two legates of legions, even a son of a centurion, a worker in wool, and others besides[1] attempted in various places to draw away soldiers after them. An unknown person went so far as to undertake to stir up a mutiny among the crews of the fleet of Cyzicus, while Elagabalus was wintering near there in Nicomedia. "So many worthless persons," says the historian Cassius, "had victoriously trodden the path to power, that it had become smoothed for all the adventurers who dared enter upon it." The era of the thirty tyrants draws nigh.

In Mount Taurus, Elagabalus had consecrated to his god the temple reared by Marcus Aurelius in honour of Faustina, and which Caracalla had dedicated to his own divinity. At Nicomedia he had himself painted in his sacerdotal costume: the picture was placed in the senate at Rome, above the statue of Victory, and each senator was obliged, before taking his seat in the curia, to burn incense before this image.[2] He entered Rome wearing a robe of purple embroidered with gold, a necklace of pearls, his cheeks painted with vermilion, and the lustre of his eyes heightened, like those of an Arab woman, by rubbing on henna. Mæsa and her two daughters followed him there. United in devising the plot, these three women did not agree in obtaining the advantages of the results. Mæsa, whose political ideas had been formed in the school of Severus, would have desired decency in conduct, order in expenditure—inopportune prudence, to which the child, intoxicated with power, gave no heed. Soæmias, on the contrary, thought that Elagabalus, being master of things human and divine, had no need to restrain himself in anything. Between these two women a division of power was effected in accordance with the taste of each. Business matters were irksome to the prince: he abandoned them to his prudent grandmother, on condition that she should not annoy him in his pleasures, and he

[1] Καὶ ἄλλοι δὲ πολλοὶ ἄλλοθι (Dion, lxxix. 7).

[2] Herod., v. 1.

gave her a seat in the senate near the consuls. To his mother he gave the presidency of a senate of women,[1] which was charged with the duty of determining for the matrons their costumes and precedency, the quantity of gold and precious stones that each might wear according to her condition, the ornaments of litters and carriages, etc.: a singular pre-occupation with etiquette in a court of upstarts in which the prince made a display of all the vices, confounded all ranks, and set a charioteer of the circus above a consular. As to the mother of Alexander, she kept herself in retirement and took especial care to keep her son with her.

Statue of Victory.[2]

The emperor was going to dishonour himself; but it should be recognized that although public morality was odiously outraged, the State did not suffer excessively from this deplorable reign.[3] The executions during the first days, and the fidelity of the legions decisively obtained for the new government, rendered the ambitious prudent; the agitation subsided, and since the Germans remained quiet and the Parthians

[1] Lamprid., *Heliog.*, 4.

[2] Museum of the Louvre, No. 435. Statue in Greek marble, apparently celebrating two triumphs by the two crowns which she holds, one placed upon her head, the other in her right hand. A trophy is under her feet.

[3] . . . καὶ μηδὲν μέγα κακὸν ἡμῖν φέροντα (Dion, lxxix. 8).

had enough to do to avert impending ruin, the cities of the frontier were at peace like those of the interior.

But at Rome, what exhibitions! Gluttony which might drive Vitellius to despair, lewdness such as to put Nero to the blush, scenes of infamy which can only be told in Latin! Elagabalus had entered into the city costumed like a priest of Phœnicia or a satrap of the Medes, bringing with him his shapeless god, the black stone of Emesa, which he honoured with barbarous songs, lascivious dances, and immolations of children.[1] He made of it the supreme divinity of the Empire. All Olympus was obliged to humiliate itself before this intruder, whom he solemnly united in marriage with the Astarte of Carthage, giving to these deities for a bridal escort those new subjects to whom for centuries the Romans had attributed their fortune, and who consequently had aided them in acquiring it. Jupiter Capitolinus was reduced to the position of courtier to the Syrian idol,[2] and the sovereign pontiff of Rome became the priest of the Sun-god.[3]

Elagabalus, Priest of the Sun-god (*Sacerd. dei Solis Elagab. S. C.*). Large Bronze.

The Conical Stone of Elagabalus on a Chariot drawn by Four Horses (*Sanct. deo Soli Elagabal*). Imperial Coin of Emesa; Mionnet.

Every year, says Herodian, he conducted his god into a magnificent temple which he had built for him in one of the suburbs of Rome. The idol was placed on a chariot sparkling with gold and precious stones, drawn by six white horses. No one rode on it, so that the god might appear to direct it himself. In front, the prince, supported by two guards, drove backwards in order to keep his eyes ever fixed on the holy image! Behind were borne the statues of all the gods, the imperial ornaments, and the precious furnishings of the palace; the garrison of Rome and the entire populace formed the escort, bearing torches and strewing the way with flowers and wreaths.[4]

Dion relates an adventure which took place about the same

[1] Lamprid., *Heliog.*, 11.

[2] *Omnes deos sui dei ministros esse aiebat* (Lamprid., *Heliog.*, 7).

[3] *Sacerdos dei solis* (Eckhel, vii. 250); in the inscriptions, he joined to his title of emperor that of priest of Elagabalus (Henzen, Nos. 5,514-5).

[4] Herod., v. 5.

time near the place where he himself was in command: "On the banks of the Ister appeared, I know not how, a genius who resembled in countenance Alexander of Macedon. He traversed Mœsia and Thrace, after the manner of Bacchus, accompanied by 400 men armed with thyrsi and clad in goat skins. They did no harm, and everything was supplied to them, lodging and provisions, at the expense of the cities, for no one dared oppose him in word or action—neither chief, nor soldier, nor procurator, nor governor of provinces; and it was in open daylight, as he had announced, that he advanced in procession as far as Byzantium. From there, having reached the territory of Chalcedon, he performed at night certain sacrifices, hid in the ground a wooden horse, and then disappeared."[1]

These populations, stultified by gross superstitions, taking for a god the fanatic or the adroit swindler who lived at their expense, aid us to comprehend that other grotesque madman, creating a religious revolution at Rome in favour of his black stone. In the preceding chapter we have seen the superior men of this age directing their thought into the depths of heaven, there to seek that God who ever keeps from view. The two facts which we have now reported show the imagination of the simple-minded, princes or people, haunted by the same phantoms. The genii, the demons, are everywhere; every religion furnishes them; and the multitude, not knowing which to listen to, confounds them in a common and fearful adoration. It is the popular jumbling together of beliefs, which is produced after its fashion on a lower plane than the syncretism of the philosophers.

"In the temple of his god, where we have already seen all the occupants of the Græco-Roman Pantheon, he placed also," says his biographer, "the image of the great goddess, the Vestal fire, the Palladium, the sacred bucklers; he desired that they might there fulfil the rites of the Jews and the Samaritans, even the ceremonies of Christianity, so that the priests of Elagabalus might possess the secret of all religions."[2]

This secret the Christians believed that they possessed; and, seeing them oppose to this religious anarchy the unity of their

[1] Dion, lxxix. 18.
[2] Lamprid., *Heliog.*, 4.

belief and the discipline of their churches, we have a presentiment that the hour of triumph is coming for them. The just loathing inspired by the high-priest of Emesa, must not, however, prevent our seeing that in the midst of these disgusting festivals an important fact lay concealed. The worship of the black stone did not accord with the Roman genius, which the Greeks had educated in respect to the plastic representation of the gods; but the monotheistic idea which this stone represented became a very Roman one. The worship of the Sun assumes more and more importance, for it was of all the pagan cults the most rational. We shall see that the Sun was the great god of Aurelian and that of the Constantine family. The most miserable of the emperors accordingly plays, without suspecting it, a part in the religious decomposition of Roman society: this debauched fool had also in his way the intoxication of the divine. He is the representative of that confused medley of beliefs from which the faith in one only God is beginning to disengage itself. This confusion will be found in the mind of his successor, but with moral purity, while Elagabalus seeks and takes from it only that which may excite his passions.

Julia Cornelia Paula. (Bust in Parian Marble. Museum of the Louvre.)

Julia Aquilia Severa Aug[usta] (after a Large Bronze of the *Cabinet de France*).

For his idiotic luxuriousness and his infamous debauches we may refer to Lampridius. History notes these turpitudes or follies;

it does not delay over them. We need only say that, after the example of Asiatic monarchs who seek their ministers in the lowest ranks of society, he assigned the most prominent offices of the State to dancers and barbers, when he did not sell them to rich

Annia Faustina.

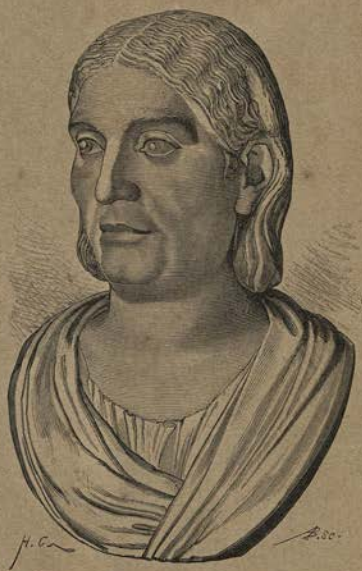
debauchees; that he treated the senate as a troop of slaves in togas, which was unhappily the truth; that his palace was sanded with gold dust, and that his garments of silk loaded with jewels were never worn twice; that he filled his fish-ponds with rose-water,[2] and that he had naval engagements represented on lakes of wine;[3] that he finally dressed as a woman, painted his face, wrought at work in wool, and had himself styled *domina* or

[1] Bust of *pavonazetto*. (Capitol, Hall of the Emperors, No. 58.)

[2] Lamprid., *Heliog.*, 19. During the banquets, the ceiling opened to let fall upon the guests such a quantity of flowers that many were stifled by them.

[3] *Ibid.*, 16, 22.

imperatrix, the emperor being at that time the son of a cook or some vigorous athlete. In less than four years he espoused four or five wives, whom he repudiated and took back again. The first, Julia Cornelia, Paula, of eminent family, retained for one year only her title and honours; he carried off the second, Julia Aquilia Severa, from the altar of Vesta, an act of sacrilege which made even the Romans of that time tremble; the third, Annia Faustina, was descended from Marcus Aurelius; the memory of the great emperor only protected her a few weeks against the caprices of the imperial debauchee.



Julia Mæsa. (Bust of the Capitol, Hall of the Emperors, No. 59.)

Meanwhile, Mæsa saw how such a manner of reigning must end. By adroit flattery she induced Elagabalus to bestow the title of Cæsar upon his cousin Alexander, adopting him as his son. "He should devote himself," she told him, "to the enjoyment of his feasts, to his sacred orgies, and to his divine duties; another would have the care of affairs." This other was twelve years old, and the adoptive father numbered sixteen years; but the new Cæsar had already revealed his sweet and happy disposition, so that the grandmother and his mother centred in him the hope of their house. His good graces, his discretion, the strict masters whom he had about him, the perils which it was known that he incurred, and the secret largesses of Mammæa to the prætorians, obtained for him a popularity at which Elagabalus became incensed. He sought various means to put him out of the

way quietly. But Mammæa did not permit her son to taste any beverage or any dish sent by the emperor; she surrounded him with trusty servants, and the thoughtlessness of Elagabalus, which allowed any one to penetrate his designs, enabled them also to prevent them. Finally, one day he decided on an overt attack. He sent an order to the senators and to the soldiers to take from his cousin the title of Cæsar, while at the same time murderers were seeking for the child in order to slay him. This order provoked a sedition in which the emperor narrowly escaped death. He was obliged to go with Alexander to the camp of the prætorians, who required of him the death or dismissal of his minions, commanded the prince to change his mode of life, and ordered their prefects to see to it, and especially to prevent Alexander from imitating his cousin. One might think them French Cabochiens of 1413 enjoining morality upon the Dauphin, driving from the Hotel Saint Pol musicians and dancers belated too far into the night, and even the councillors who were displeasing to them, and whom they conducted to Parliament to be judged or slaughtered on the way there. There is, however, this difference: in 1413 Paris was in a revolution, and at Rome, in 221, the orders given by the soldiery to the prince had become the regular procedure.

Elagabalus. (Statue, heroic size. Collection Mattei. Clarac, *Musée*, etc., pl. 768, No. 2,487 A.)

On the first of January, 222, the two children were to go before the senate to take possession of the consular dignities. It required all the urging of Mæsa and the threat of a new sedition to induce Elagabalus to allow himself to be accompanied by his adopted son. But he absolutely refused to fulfil with

him, at the Capitol, the customary ceremonies. Another day he circulated a report of the death of Alexander, in order to judge, from what the soldiers might do, whether he might put him to death without incurring too much risk. Secretly informed that the young prince was alive, they demanded his presence among them with loud shouts, recalled the guard which they sent each morning to the palace, and withdrew to their camp. The trial resulted badly. Elagabalus hastened to appease them by showing to them the Cæsar. His mother and Mammæa followed him, each exciting the soldiery against the other. Mammæa at last carried the day. Violent clamours arose, then they came to blows; the friends, the ministers of Elagabalus, Soæmias herself, were slaughtered. The effeminate voluptuary, whom a crumpled rose-leaf disturbed, hid himself in the sinks of the camp. There he was put to death, and his corpse, dragged through the streets, not being able to pass through the outlet of a sewer, was flung into the Tiber, whither the god of Emesa was near following its pontiff. The senate consigned his memory to infamy, and history does the same. This was on March 11th, 222.

His cousin, aged thirteen and a half years,[1] was proclaimed Augustus and took the names of Marcus Aurelius Alexander, to which the soldiers added, in memory of him whom some gave him for a grandfather, the name of Severus.[2]

To mark distinctly that the oriental orgy was ended, and that the ancient deities dispossessed by the Syrian idol had resumed their sway, Alexander engraved on his coins the title of priest of Rome, *sacerdos Urbis*.[3]

[1] Herodian (v. 7) says that he was entering on his twelfth year when Elagabalus adopted him. He is generally assigned three years more.

[2] *Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander* (Eckhel, vii. 281). I have mentioned (vol. v. p. 522) the session of the senate at which Alexander declined the other names which the Fathers desired to confer upon him.

[3] Eckhel, vii. 270.

Julia Soæmias Augusta.

CHAPTER XCIII.

ALEXANDER SEVERUS (MARCH 11, 222—MARCH 19, 235 A.D.)

I.—Reaction against the Preceding Reign; Mammæa and Ulpian; the Council of the Prince.

ONCE more then, by the grace of the soldiers, the heritage of Augustus was in the hands of two women and a child. What vitality there was in this Empire, which, fallen under the rule of women, yet remained erect and imposing!

But these two women were of superior minds. We are acquainted with the skilful prudence of Mæsa and the elevated spirit of the mother of Alexander. The latter, by a well-ordered education, developed the happy disposition of this gentle and pious soul. She placed about her son the ablest masters, provided they were also the most honourable, and she taught him enough of literature and art to have a taste and respect for them; not enough to tempt him to bestow upon them the time demanded by public business. It will be remarked that Alexander expressed himself more easily in Greek than in Latin. This invasion of Greek into higher Roman society is a sign of the progress accomplished by another invasion, that of oriental hellenism and Alexandrian syncretism, of which this prince was also a representative.

Julia Mammæa Aug[usta], Mother of Alexander Severus. (Gold Coin.)

"From the day of his accession," says Herodian,[1] "he was surrounded with all the pomp of sovereign power; but the care of the Empire was left to the two princesses, who made an effort to bring back good morals and the ancient dignified demeanour. They chose sixteen senators, the most eminent for experience and

[1] vi. i. A coin of 222 bears the words, *Liberalitas. Aug.* This was the resuming of the *congiarium* granted, *ut moris erat, suscepto imperio*, says Eckhel.

integrity of life, to form the ordinary council of the prince.[1] Nothing was carried into execution without their advice. The people, the army, the senate, were charmed with this new form of government, which replaced the most insolent tyranny by a sort of aristocracy."

I do not know whether the senate was as satisfied as Herodian says with the new importance given to this *consilium principis*. We shall refer elsewhere to this institution, which took from the ancient masters of Rome their last prerogatives.

The Conscript Fathers gave themselves at least the pleasure of devoting to the infernal gods the prince or the consul who, in the future, should give a woman a seat in the august assembly. No doubt this decree of the senate appeared to them as worthy of memory as that which had ordered the victorious Pyrrhus to depart from Italy.[2]

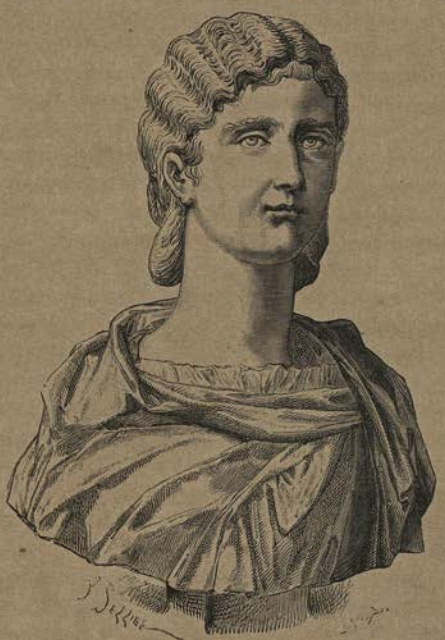
"They made haste," continues the historian, "to restore to their sanctuaries the statues of the gods which Elagabalus had taken away. They removed from their places and honours the functionaries who had obtained them unworthily, and intrusted duties to the most capable citizens. . . . . In order to preserve the prince from the mistakes which might be caused by absolute authority, the ardour of youth, or by some of the vices natural to his family, Mammæa scrupulously guarded the entrance to the palace and allowed no man to gain admission whose morals were of bad repute."

This reaction against the last reign, these precautions to save the new from the same excesses, were legitimate. They could not do this better than by the government of aged men and women, by this paternal and gentle authority, the calm and somnolence of which were calculated to protect this prince's minority, and to enable him to reach full age, if the soldiers consented to grant him time to do so.

[1] Lampridius (*Alex.*, 15) makes the number twenty. The council was complemented, in certain circumstances, by adding other senators, so that the number of fifty Conscript Fathers, required for the validity of a decree, might be attained. This council also made nominations to the senate. (*Ibid.*, 18.) The last great jurisconsults of Rome, Florentinus, Marcianus, Hermogenes, Saturninus, and Modestinus, numerous fragments of whose writings the *Pandects* have preserved to us, had seats in it, in company with Paulus and Ulpian.

[2] Lamprid., *Heliog.*, 18. Dating from the time of Alexander Severus we find no more senatus-consulta.

Into the imperial council Mammæa had called her compatriot Ulpian, whom she appointed prefect of the prætorium,[1] which made him the second personage in the state. In reality, considering the age of the emperor, Ulpian was the first,[2] for he was present at the audiences of the prince, reported matters to him with the solutions to be given, and had the conduct of the whole government. Under this great jurisconsult,[3] justice was impartial and the police service vigilant. Those who speculated on the misery of the people, the venality of a judge, or the compliance of a functionary had to render strict account; but no one lost his life or property without a judgment given after discussion on both sides.[4] Many honourable rescripts were promulgated. They did not introduce any modifications into the law, but we see in them the provident kindliness which is characteristic of this



Julia Mammæa, Mother of Alexander Severus.
(Bust of Pentelican Marble. Museum of the Louvre.)

[1] He appears to have been so under Elagabalus. (Lamprid., *Alex.*, 26, and Aur. Victor, *de Cæs.*, 26.)

[2] See, for the powers of the prefect of the prætorium, p. 102.

[3] Of the numerous works of Ulpian, the most important were eighty-three books *ad Edictum*, fifty-one *ad Sabinum*. Numerous fragments remain to us of his *Liber regularum singularis*. The extracts from these various treatises form a third of the *Digest*.

[4] This is the assertion of Lampridius. Yet the death of the father-in-law of Alexander, that of Turinus, whom he caused to be suffocated, the murder of several of his councillors (Lamprid., *Alex.*, 67), and some others, were not the result of judicial orders.

reign,[1] and which we have also previously found in the legislation of the Antonines and of Severus. Mention is even made in them of the liberty of the subject: conditioned, it is true, by their good will and obedience.[2]

The ability of these wise councillors is further marked by certain details of administration, some of which were of real importance. The prefecture of the prætorium came to be of senatorial rank: the extension of the judicial cognizance of the prefect, who sometimes had to sit in judgment on senators, rendered this change necessary, and his decisions had the force of law when they were not contrary to existing constitutions.[3] With Ulpian this office attained the zenith of its power.

Fourteen curators, all of consular rank, were charged with the duty of deciding, with the prefect of Rome, all affairs concerning the fourteen districts of the city.[4] This edict furnished a municipal council to the capital of the Empire, the police of which had hitherto been subject to the sole authority of the prefect; in addition to which he prescribed that the resolutions, to be valid, should be adopted in presence of all the members, or at least of a majority of them. This council, appointed and not elected, was none the less for Rome a guarantee of better administration.

The assessors of the presidents were entitled to fees, which gave them the character of public functionaries, but increased the expenditures of the treasury;[5] and it was forbidden to the provincial governors, as well as to the persons employed about them, to engage in business or usury in the countries under their rule. We have seen[6] what wise recommendations Ulpian made to them for the protection of the common people. It had long been the custom to make grants of lands to the veterans: he established the rule that officers and soldiers put in possession of domains on the frontiers might transmit them to their children, when the

[1] For instance: . . . . *Cavetur ut si patronus libertum suum non aluerit, jus patroni perdat* (*Digest*, xxxvii. 14, 5, § 1).

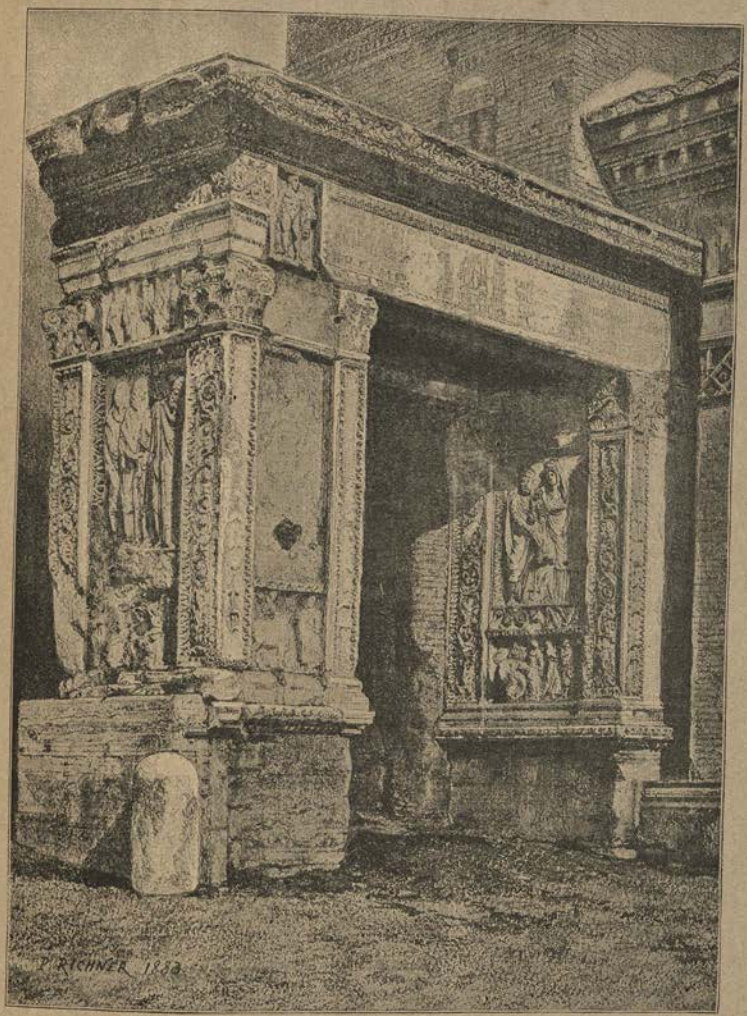
[2] *Digest*, xlix. 1, 25: . . . . *tantum mihi curæ est eorum, qui reguntur, libertatis, quantum et bonæ voluntatis eorum et obedientiæ.*

[3] *Code*, i. 26, 2, *ann.* 235.

[4] Lamprid., *Alex.*, 32.

[5] *Ibid.*, 45. Pescennius Niger had already wished to introduce this reform, *ne consiliarii eos gravarent quibus assidebant* (Spart., *Nig.*, 7).

[6] Vol. v. p. 472.



The Arch of the Goldsmiths at Rome (p. 293).

latter followed the profession of arms; otherwise the land reverted to the imperial treasury.[1] These were military benefices and the beginning of a new order of property.

The post of *dux*, that is, of chief of the army, without territorial command, which we have seen originating under Severus, appears to become a regular office.[2]

Moneta restituta.[5]

Finally, the government constituted what may be called deposit banks,[3] and he organized into corporations the trades which had not as yet taken that form; he assigned to each one a *defensor*, as will be given later to the cities,[4] and he established for them a special jurisdiction. Some were very rich, that of the goldsmiths, for example, who erected an arch to Septimius Severus. It was a new order of industry produced or developed.

II.—Gentleness, Piety, and Weakness of Alexander Severus.

What part had the prince in these measures? With an emperor of thirteen the councillors must have retained power for a long period. But it may be said that all which they did in the interests of the subjects responded, if not to the thought, at least to the heart of the prince.

The biographer of Alexander has sought to make of this reign what Xenophon had made of that of Cyrus, a beautiful *morality*, and, although this scribe of Constantine had not yet embraced the religion of his master, he has, to flatter him, represented the least pagan emperor as half Christian. From this has resulted that Alexander has been the spoiled child of history, as if, on coming out of the corrupt atmosphere in which they had just been living, and before entering the bloody gloom of the age following,

[1] Lamprid., *Alex.*, 57.

[2] Lamprid., *ibid.*, 51. Capitolinus, in the life of Gordian III., also speaks of *duces honorati*, that is, honorary dukes.

[3] Lamprid., *ibid.*, 38. Medals, *Moneta restituta*, etc., attest also a monetary reform (Eckhel, vii. 279); but the explanations of Lampridius on this subject (39) throw no light on the question.

[4] Lamprid., *ibid.*, 22 and 33. This *defensor* was no doubt a different person from the *patronus*.

[5] MON. RESTITVTA. Moneta standing, holding a balance and a horn of plenty. (Medium bronze of Alexander Severus.)

they had dwelt with complacency upon this pleasing figure, which youth, virtue, and misfortune have consecrated. In certain respects this good fame of Alexander is legitimate. After the saturnalia of the previous reign he exhibits an emperor pure in morals, simple in tastes, and who made his life a public example more efficacious than all legal enactments. One feels an attachment for this amiable prince who wished the public crier to proclaim, while criminals were being chastised, these words graven on the front of his palace: "Do not to another what you would not have done to yourself;" who wrote in verse the lives of the good princes,[1] and each day went into his *lararium* to pass some moments before the images of those whom he called the benefactors of humanity, princes or philosophers, founders of empires or religions;[2] who, finally, constantly read over the *Republic* of Plato, the treatise *de Officiis* of Cicero, and the *Epistles* of Horace, to adopt from these noble books his rules of conduct. Every seventh day he ascended to the Capitol and visited the temples of the city, without, however, making rich offerings in them, thinking with Persius, that the worship loved by the gods is the practice of virtue, and that they have no need of gold:

. . . . *In sanctis quid facit aurum?*

But he was liberal to the poor, to his friends, and to those of his officers who had well fulfilled their duties.

We remember the grand alimentary institution of Trajan; he continued and extended it,[3] and founded another; he lent money to poor families that they might buy land, and required of them only an interest of three per cent., payable from the product of the funds.[4] He often even made a gratuitous gift of land, slaves,

[1] . . . . *Vitas principum bonorum versibus scripsit* (Lamprid., *Alex.*, 27).

[2] Lampridius, who supplies this information (*Alex.*, 28), adds this bit of detail: "He did not enter into his oratory unless *si facultas esset, id est, si non cum uxore cubuisset.*" This was a general rule of which Ovid had already spoken (*Fasti*, ii. 329, and iv. 657). The Church inherited this custom. "This kind of abstinence," says Abbé Greppo, "was practised in the primitive Church prior to participation in the holy mysteries, as still takes place in the churches of the East, whose ministers are not constrained to celibacy." (*Trois mém. d'hist. ecclés.*, p. 280.) The Russian peasant observes the same rule the day preceding the Sabbath.

[3] *Puellas et pueros Mamæanas et Mammæanos instituit* (Lamprid., *Alex.*, 56). A coin of Plautilla, which represents a woman carrying a child, shows that Severus also took care of this institution. (Eckhel, vii. 226.)

[4] Lamprid., *Alex.*, 21. As to imposts, it is impossible to admit with Lampridius that he

Eudeli del. Dosso pinxit | Imp. Fraillery. | Dambourgez chromolith.

GOLD PLATE CALLED THE PATERA OF RENNES

(CABINET DE FRANCE)

cattle, and implements of agriculture. If he augmented the tax on the industries of luxury, on the goldsmiths,[1] gilders, furriers, etc., he diminished the other imposts, and lamented that fiscal agents were a necessary evil. He granted remissions to a number of cities, on condition that the money which he allowed them should serve to rebuild their ruined edifices; he restored at his own expense many ancient bridges and constructed new ones. And finally, he founded schools, paid professors, pensioned pupils, and recompensed advocates who took nothing from their client:[2] these are our scholarships and our judiciary aid.

Sallustia Orbiana, Second Wife of Alexander Severus.[3]

For himself, great frugality and much economy, to the extent of being reduced to borrowing silver ware and slaves, when he gave a state banquet; toward all, plebeians or senators, even towards his own domestics, an affability which in the emperor did not let the master be seen. At twenty he was a sage.

This wisdom, which was not the fruit of experience but a gift

reduced them to the twentieth of what Elagabalus exacted. On the payment of the impost in gold, see above, p. 246.

[1] A masterpiece of goldsmith's work of this epoch is a cup of massive gold, discovered in 1774, at Rennes, while demolishing a house of the metropolitan chapter, and called in the *Cabinet de France, Patera of Rennes*. It had been hidden six feet under ground in the time of Aurelian, for the imperial coins most recently found in the same locality were of Posthumus and Aurelian. It is composed of an *emblema*, or central part, and a border adorned with sixteen aurei of emperors and empresses from Hadrian to Geta, which places its fabrication at the time of Severus. The *emblema* represents a challenge between Bacchus and Hercules; in the frieze which surrounds the principal subject and complements its thought, Bacchus triumphs over Hercules. The decoration is completed by the sixteen gold coins encircled with wreaths of acanthus and of laurel. This cup, stolen from the *Cabinet de France* in 1831, was found intact some days afterwards under an arch of the Pont Marie. We give it in an extra plate. For further details see Chabouillet, *Catalogue général*, pp. 357 *et seq.*, No. 2,537.

[2] *Rhetoribus, grammaticis, medicis, aruspicibus, mathematicis, mechanicis, architectis salaria instituit, et auditoria decrevit, et discipulos cum annonis pauperum filios modo ingenuos dari jussit. Etiam in provinciis oratoribus forensibus multum detulit, plerisque etiam annonas dedit, quos constitisset gratis agere.* (Lamprid., *Alex.*, 44.)

[3] The empress Sallustia Orbiana wearing a diadem; on the reverse, FECVNDITAS TEMPORVM. Orbiana seated; before her, Fecundity kneeling, holding a horn of plenty and carrying two children. (Bronze medallion.)

of nature, this goodness which showed itself in everything, does honour to the man: of the prince other things are demanded. His filial tenderness was weakness when he did not dare to resist his mother, who, troubled by so many catastrophes, sought in heaping up treasure[1] a guarantee against evil days; as if, for her and her son, in case of defeat, there was any other refuge than death. This weakness even becomes odious if, as Herodian relates, it allowed Mammæa to drive from the palace his young bride, who claimed the honours of an *augusta*, and who deserved them;[2] if he suffered his father-in-law to be put to death for having complained to the administrators of justice of the time—the soldiers of the prætorium—of the outrages which he had received from the empress.[3]

His regret at not being able to abolish all the imposts is the expression of a woman, or of a courtier of the rabble, and his love for the *Republic* of Plato, the revelation of a mind which the good sense of Horace, his other favourite, did not preserve from fair illusions. The prohibiting senators from investing their money, capitalists from lending at more than three per cent., those whose consciences were disquieted from presenting themselves at the imperial receptions: these moralities, proclaimed by the herald or affixed to edicts, issued from a good disposition; but how was their execution to be assured? The regulations about costumes, to distinguish the orders of citizens, about garments for summer and winter, for fair weather and rain, were other puerilities, of which Ulpian and Paulus surely prescribed very little. Before appointing a functionary, he published his name, and invited the citizens, in case the candidate of the prince had committed some crime, to denounce him, adding, however, that the informer would be punished with death if he did not furnish proof of his accusation. This is a twofold absurdity: a serious government is bound to make

[1] See on this subject the sarcasms of Julian in the *Cæsars*.

[2] The name of this young woman is not known; but after having repudiated her, Alexander re-married, and though no author has spoken of his second wife, we have coins of hers and an inscription in which she is named with the title of *augusta: Guæa Seia Herennia Sallustia Barbia Orbiana Augusta*. See Eckhel, vii. p. 284, and *Corp. Inscr. Lat.*, ii. 3,734.

[3] Others accuse the father-in-law of a conspiracy against his son-in-law, which is hardly probable. The catastrophe was doubtless brought about by a woman's quarrel. The young empress may have had the lot of Plautilla, without deserving it, for she loved her husband tenderly. (Herod., vi. 5; Lamprid., *Alex.*, 49.)

its own inquests, and no one was tempted to respond to an appeal which had so terrible a penalty. But Alexander Severus wished to transform the Empire into an ideal republic.

Praise is still lavished on the pious thought which led him to place, in his *lararium*, Apollonius of Tyana by the side of Jesus, Orpheus beside Abraham: a vague religion of humanity, the confused aspirations of which are, however, sufficient for some choice souls. S. Augustine also knew a matron who had constructed a miniature chapel in which she burned incense before the images of Jesus and Paul, of Homer and Pythagoras.[1] These acts of homage to sanctity and genius honour the man, but it was not with a belief so simple that one could direct people eager for the marvellous.

Like the prince whose name and virtues he possessed, the young emperor would have been in private life the foremost of men; in sovereign power he was, far more than Marcus Aurelius, inadequate. This is because the government of human things is a hard task. The great men in this are men of command, those who can comprehend and are of strong will. These qualities were especially necessary in a state such as the Roman Empire, and, it must be acknowledged, Alexander Severus did not possess them. His bust in the Louvre, with its weak and undecided features, suggests a mild-mannered person, incapable of acting, and who seems to stare without seeing. Julian, in the *Cæsars*, shows him sitting in sadness on the steps leading to the hall where the emperors and gods are going to banquet; Silenus mocks at him and his mother, the hoarder of treasure; Justice even consents indeed to chastise his murderers, but she turns away "from the poor fool, the great simpleton, who in a corner bewails his misfortune!"

For several years the soldiery, satiated, had left the Empire at peace. But to preserve discipline among these coarse, greedy, and violent men, who knew their strength and no longer knew the Empire, the magistrates, or the law, would have required a prince who might impress upon them a respectful fear at the same time with obedience, who would keep them in harness, glut them with

[1] *Liber de Hæresibus*, iii. 7.

booty and glory, that is to say, pride. With its mighty army of mercenaries the Empire was condemned to have no more great generals. Severus had been one: Alexander was not. So the civil order, which the former had protected against his soldiers, was ruined by the latter.

It is said that, before renouncing philosophy and the arts, he had consulted the Virgilian lots, and that the poet-prophet had responded by the famous lines:

Excudent alii spirantia mollius æra.

. . . . . .

Tu regere imperio populos, Romane memento.

Lampridius gives to his hero the qualities which these verses demand for the exercise of the sovereign power; he makes of him a fierce defender of the ancient discipline. "The soldiers," he says, "called him Severus on account of his excessive sternness;"[1] and as a proof he shows the population flocking together on the passage of the army, who "took the soldiers for senators,"[2] seeing the gravity of their mien and the wisdom of their conduct; or else he is citing certain classic reminiscences which the prince utilized. A senator known for his peculations comes and salutes him at the curia; Alexander renews against him the apostrophe of Cicero to Catiline: *O tempora, O mores! vivit, immo in senatum venit!* A legion mutinies; he hurls at it the words of Cæsar: "Retire, Quirites." Some officers, who had not been able to restrain their soldiers, were, it is true, put to death, but at the end of a month the culprit legion was reinstated. They also speak of troops decimated. The following facts do not permit us to give to this reign such a character for severity.

A quarrel arose in Rome between the civilians and the prætorians. Both sides maintained their quarrel;[3] but, for the populace to dare to affront the troops, they must have been driven to extremities by many deeds of insolence, and we know that the soldiers were not sparing of them. There was fighting for three days, and many were slain. At last, the prætorians,

[1] Lamprid., *Alex.*, 25.

[2] . . . *ut non milites sed senatores transire dicères* (*ibid.*, 49).

[3] See what is said of the Roman *plebs*, in the appendix to Book lxxix. of Dion, by the anonymous author who has written this passage.

driven from the streets, set fire to the houses; the conflagration threatened to involve the whole city when the two parties consented to desist. It is not known what part the government had in this affair; but we have the right to say that such disorders occur only under a wavering authority, and we may ask ourselves

Alexander Severus. (Bust of the Vatican.)

what the legionaries of the provinces did, if the prætorians, so affectionate to the young prince, conducted themselves in this manner to his face.

Mammæa had at first placed at the head of the prætorians two tried captains, Flavianus and Chrestus; later she also gave them Ulpian for a colleague. These men of war did not relish

finding in the prætorium lawyers who, bringing there the regular habits of magistrates, had the orders executed. The new prefect was displeasing to the cohorts and to their chiefs, who formed a scheme for getting rid of him.[1] Ulpian anticipated them by killing the two prefects and their accomplices. This tragedy provoked another. The whole corps took up the cause of the victims, and Ulpian was several times in danger of death. In a final and formidable riot he took refuge in the palace; the soldiers forced its gates and slew him at the feet of Alexander, who covered him in vain with his imperial purple.[2] This was in 228. One might already imagine oneself on the shores of the Bosphorus hearing janissaries demand the head of a vizir.

A certain Epagathus, an old confidential agent of Caracalla and Macrinus, had played a part in this catastrophe by inciting the soldiers against Ulpian. He was only a freedman; but they did not dare to punish him for fear of exciting a new revolt. He was charged with a mission to Egypt, then recalled under a pretext into Crete, where the executioner awaited him.[3] This seraglio justice would of itself prove the incurable weakness of this government.

The following account of Dion is another indication of this. Our historian was not a great warrior, he ought never to have adopted strong resolutions. Yet when he returned from his government of Pannonia the prætorians found that he had there shown himself too severe in discipline. "They demanded my punishment," he says, "fearing lest they should be submitted to a similar rule." Instead of paying attention to their complaints the emperor gave me the consulate. But the irritation of the prætorians made him fear that, seeing me with the insignia of this dignity, they might kill me, and he ordered me to spend the remainder of my term of office at some place in Italy, outside Rome."[4] The prudent consular did better: finding that public life was becoming too difficult, he abandoned Rome, Italy, even his

[1] Zosimus, i. 11.

[2] . . . . *quem sæpe a militum ira objectu purpuræ suæ defendit* (*Alexander*). (Lamprid., *Alex.*, 51.)

[3] Dion, lxxx. 2, 4.

[4] *Id.*, lxxx. 4 and 5

great book of history, which he closed at this last narration, and with this line of Homer:

> "But Jove beyond the encountering arms, the dust,
> The carnage, and the bloodshed and the din
> Bore Hector."[1]

Dion had nothing in common with Hector, but it was from a bloody conflict that he likewise retired.

We here take leave of a colourless writer, a man, however, who, having studied the Republic in its grandeur and its decadence, the Empire under Augustus and Nero, Hadrian and Commodus, was able to follow the logical connection of this history unfolding across the centuries, under the double action of political wisdom and of necessities produced by circumstances. If we inquire what were his sentiments in the matter of government,[2] we shall see that, in spite of the acts of cruelty which he had related, in spite of those which he himself had witnessed and well-nigh been the victim, Dion was a great partisan of the imperial monarchy. When the emperor was a bad one, they longed for a change of prince, they did not desire a change in the form of government. No one at that time imagined any other, and, it must also be admitted, no other was possible. Dion only asks of the prince that he should be on good terms with the senate, his council. This had previously been the wish of Tacitus, and it had been the practice of the Antonines. Unfortunately, since Caracalla, and more so every day, the prince and the consuls, prefects of the prætorium and senators, were all at the mercy of the soldiers, and the characteristic of such rule is frequency of riotous disturbances.

Seditions, indeed, broke out everywhere; some of them, says a contemporary, were quite formidable;[3] and it was necessary to cashier entire legions;[4] those of Mesopotamia killed their chief, Flavius Heracleo, and made an emperor, who, to escape from them, threw himself into the Euphrates and was drowned. Another assumed the purple in Osrhoene. A third tried to assume it at

[1] *Iliad*, xi. 163. (Bryant's trans.)

[2] Dion, lii. 13 *et seq.*

[3] *Id.*, lxxx. 3. Cf. Zosimus, i. 12.

[4] Cf. Lamprid., *Alex.*, 53, 54, 59; Herod., vi. 4, 7; Aur. Victor, *de Cæs.*, xxiv. 3; Dion, lxxx. 4.

Rome even. In the case of this last, the emperor, informed of it, invites him to the palace, takes him to the senate, to the army, overwhelms him with matters of business and breaks him down with fatigue. After a few days the ambitious person asks leave to return to his house and his obscurity.

These seditions and attempts miscarry, but the Empire is agitated by them, and they afford encouragement to the enemy. In Mauretania Tingitana, on the frontier of *Illyricum* and that of Armenia, invaders have to be repelled; the Germans sack a part of Gaul, and the Persians claim back from the Empire the ancient provinces of Cyrus—Asia as far as the Cyclades.

III.—The Sassanids.

Since the day when Arsan the Brave had revolted against the Seleucidæ 470 years[1] had elapsed, a very long duration for an Oriental dynasty. The Parthian monarchy had extended from the Euphrates to the Indus, but the Arsacids, men of shrewdness or force according to the occasion, had nothing of the organizing genius of Rome. They neither established a permanent, and hence regular army, nor an administration binding together the diverse elements of the state so as to form a homogeneous whole. They suffered to exist about them a mighty feudalism,[2] the cause of constant trouble, and, in the provinces, populations which, having in common with the rest of the Empire nothing except the tribute paid to the great king, retained their customs, their national memories and chiefs; that is to say, the hope and the means of some day regaining their independence. The indignities which Trajan, Avidius Cassius, and Septimius Severus, Caracalla even, had inflicted upon the Parthian monarchy, had destroyed its prestige, which the treaty with Macrinus did not restore.

In the mountains of Persis lived a man of royal blood, Ardeshir or Artaxerxes, regarded as a descendant of Darius, and said to be son or grandson of Sassan, whence the name of his race, the

[1] Or 476 according to other reckonings. Cf. De Sainte-Croix, *Mém. sur le gouvernement des Parthes*, p. 30.

[2] Dion, xli. 15; Tac., *Ann.*, xi. 10, and Herod., vi. 12.

Sassanids.[1] Admitted into the household of the governor of Persis, he attracted notice by his courage and address, gained the favour of the people at the same time as that of his master, and, the latter having been dethroned, he slew his successor, raised a revolt among the Persians, as Cyrus had formerly done, drew in the neighbouring nations, with whom he had by anticipation secured a good understanding, and vanquished the Parthians in three battles. In the last Artabanus was killed, and Ardeshir assumed the tiara (226-227). On the cliff of Nakschi-Roustan, in the environs of Persepolis, one yet sees two warriors engaged in strange combat. It is Ardeshir wresting the diadem from his rival. By consecrating this souvenir near the ancient sanctuary of the Achæmenids, he wished to testify before all eyes that his victory was the restoration of the ancient empire of Cyrus.

Artaxerxes I.[2]

Oriental monarchies are instituted as rapidly as they decay. In a few years the mountaineers of Persis had come back into the capitals of the first Achæmenids, "and all the kings had put on the sash of submission, suspended from their ears the ring of servitude, and taken upon their shoulders the harness of obedience."[3] As successor to a state whose springs of action were worn out by long use, Rome now beheld, along its eastern frontier, an empire abounding in warlike zeal, as these new dominions always do.

The revolution just accomplished was religious as well as political. The Arsacids, subjected to the influence of the civilization which Alexander had carried into Eastern Asia, had become Hellenized. They delighted in the customs of Greece, spoke its

[1] According to Sainte-Croix (*ibid.*, p. 22) the Persians had retained their national chiefs, and Ardeshir, at the moment of revolt, governed the country by virtue of this position.

[2] Artaxerxes wears the round tiara adorned with the symbol in the form of a caduceus, called *mahrou*. The Pehlvi legend gives the name of the prince. (Cornelian, cut in cabochon, $1\frac{8}{155}$ in. high by $\frac{87}{100}$ broad. Gem of the *Cabinet de France*, No. 1,339.)

[3] Mirkhond, *Hist. des Sassanides*, tr. Sylvestre de Sacy, p. 278.

language, adored some of its gods, had the dramas of the great poets of Athens represented at their court,[1] and in the legends on their coins, which were in Greek, they adopted among other titles that of Philhellenes.[2] This mental culture disposed them to tolerance, and Christianity had profited by it to penetrate into their provinces. But the tributary nations had preserved the old worship of Irân, Mazdeism: the consecrated fire was always burning on the *pyres*, and the magi were numerous. They served the cause of him who was announced as the avenger of Ormuzd and the restorer of the laws of Zoroaster. This monotheistic religion, one of those which do most honour to humanity, placed below the infinite being, Ahoura-Mazda, *izeds* or good genii, celestial spirits and ministers of the will of the Most High. Hence it did not require many expressions of flattery to induce the magi to transform a powerful and religious king into a visible ized; and Sapor could say, without wounding any one: "Do you not know that I am of the race of the gods?"[4]

Coin of Artaxerxes, bearing on the Reverse a Lighted Pyre.[3]

Ormuzd.[5]

In return for the assistance which these priests gave him, Ardeshir accorded them great influence. "He restored," says a Greek historian, "the magi to honour."[6] This body of clergy, again restored to power, will make intolerance

[1] See vol. iii. p. 248.

[2] De Sacy, *Mém. sur diverses antiquités de la Perse*, p. 44.

[3] At the right, the head of Artaxerxes, with the tiara bearing the star, symbol of the sun, and the legend: "The Adorer of Ormuzd . . . ." On the reverse, a pyre, from which dart flames. Legend: "The Divine Artaxerxes." Silver coin.

[4] De Sacy, *Mémoire*, etc., p. 36-41. On the monotheistic character of Mazdeism, see the articles of M. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, *Journal des Savants*, June and July, 1878.

[5] The bust of Ormuzd, surrounded by flames and placed on a pyre. Pehlvi inscription. Annulary seal. (Intaglio on veined agate, $1\frac{4}{10}$ in. diameter. *Cabinet de France*, No. 1,336.)

[6] Ἐξ οὗ καὶ παισὶ Πέρσαις οἱ Μάγοι ἐτιμῶντο (Nicéph., *Hist. eccl.*, i. p. 55, ed. of 1630);

the political law of the Sassanids and will let persecution loose against the Christians; but the religious and national zeal of these princes will also give to the new dynasty a vitality and renown which the preceding had not known.[1] As the danger to the Roman Empire is increasing in this quarter, it will be compelled to withdraw its forces from the line of the Rhine and the Danube, in order to fortify that of the Euphrates and the Tigris; and to watch this new enemy from a nearer point, it will end by displacing the centre of its power, by removing its capital from the west to the east.

The war of four centuries which is about to commence between the two empires, is therefore one of those many wars which religious zeal has kindled. It is characterized at first, with regard to both nations, by a return to memories of the expedition of Alexander: on one side admiration and confidence, on the other hatred and maledictions. We have seen Caracalla honouring the memory of the Macedonian hero, the second Severus taking his name, and the legions organizing in phalanx. It seemed as though the shade of the Greek conqueror was going to march before the Roman army to guide it on the road to Ctesiphon. On the other side of the Tigris, this Alexander whose generous soul we are wont to extol, had become to the magi, in their patriotic and religious lament, "the accursed" who slaughtered the nobles and priests, who "burned the books of revelation," and who "is burning in his turn in eternal flames." Even to this day the Parsees do not speak of "Iskender Roumi" except as an abominable tyrant. "After him," said they, "religion was brought low and the faithful into oppression, until king Ardeshir had re-established the true faith."[2] These conflicting sentiments announce the grandeur of the struggle.

Agathias (bk. ii. pp. 64–5) thinks the same. M. de Harlez (*Avesta*, p. xxxv.) says that Ardeshir was of the race of the magi and himself a magus.

[1] On their coins the Sassanids assume the title of "servant of Ormuzd," and on the reverse they have placed "the altar of fire," a representation and title which are found on the medals of the Arsacids. See De Sacy, *Mém. sur diverses antiq. de la Perse*, pp. 171 *et seq.*

[2] See the article of M. James Darmesteter, *la Légende d'Alexandre chez les Perses*, in vol. xxxv. of the *Bibliothèque des Hautes-Études*.

IV.—Expeditions against the Persians and the Germans; Death of Alexander Severus.

Before engaging in close contest with the great empire of the West, the son of Sassan turned his weapons against the neighbouring populations of Roman Mesopotamia. He attacked the city of Atra, the camp of refuge of the Scenite Arabs, against which he was not more fortunate than Trajan and Severus, and he attempted to overthrow the Arsacids of Armenia, who from the summits of their mountains and inaccessible fortresses defied invasion. These expeditions no doubt had but a secondary interest to him, at least this two-fold check did not lessen his hopes, and in 231 he invaded the Roman province.

At this news Alexander and his pacific councillors wrote to the Persian a beautiful letter, full of the most edifying advices. The ravages continued; Nisibis was besieged and the enemy's scouts penetrated as far as Cappadocia. "All these lands belong to me," said Ardeshir, and it seemed as if he was going to take them. There was no alternative at Rome but to resign themselves to war: great preparations were made, and from each province, from each army, went forth detachments who directed their course toward Syria. Alexander quitted his capital in tears, but firmly resolved to do his duty, if not as a soldier, at least as an emperor.[1] He took the route by way of Illyria and Thrace, collecting soldiers on his march, and entered Syria with a large army. He there found the troops given to every disorder and to mutiny; perhaps there had even been a revolt, if the proclamation of an emperor by the army of Mesopotamia may be referred to this time. On the arrival of the prince and reinforcements sent by the legions of Pannonia all became quiet. A phalanx of 30,000 men was organized in remembrance of successes obtained by the phalanx of the Macedonian hero; Alexander even wished his guard to have argyraspides, or shields of silver. Four hundred Persians magnificently dressed and armed came and summoned the emperor to evacuate Asia; he considered the demand insolent, and, refusing

[1] Herodian says (vii. 2) that he was accused of indolence and timidity in war.

to recognize them as ambassadors, he shut them up in Phrygia, where villages and lands were given them, and then entered on the campaign in 232.

At this point accounts differ. According to a contemporary, the emperor divided his forces into three corps: the first took the route by way of Armenia, a country in alliance with the Romans, to penetrate into the territory of the Medes; the second by the desert, to reach the confluence of the Tigris and the Euphrates and directly threaten Persia; the third marched right on through Upper Mesopotamia, but with extreme delay, for which they accuse Mammæa, who feared to expose her son. The army of the north amassed much booty, suffering however considerable losses and without obtaining any serious result, because this route could not conduct them to the vital parts of the new empire. The Persians opposed slight forces to this somewhat remote attack; they concentrated against the army of the south, which was crushed, then against that of the centre, which, composed in great part of soldiers accustomed, on the banks of the Danube and the Rhine, to cold and dampness, was prostrated by the dry and burning heat of the desert. Under this climate, which requires sobriety, "the Illyrians" drank and ate

Julia Mammæa as Venus Pudica.[1]

[1] Museum of the Louvre. Statue in Pentelican marble, formerly assigned to Julia Soæmias. The antique head is reproduced; the attributes of Ceres have been added by a modern artist. The empresses were often represented in the character of Venus. The Museum of Naples possesses a hall styled that of the Venuses, which are portraits rather than ideal figures.

as in Germany: this error in diet decimated them; the mortality brought on the plague, and it became necessary to fall back after a few successes of doubtful value. Alexander himself fell sick from fatigue and anxiety. As in the time of Antony, the retreat of the army of the north across the mountains of Armenia was disastrous, and the Roman corpses again strewed the ways of this country in the year 233. But they made no account of the dead. These soldiers, recruited among the barbarians[1] and the dregs of the Roman population, left behind them neither relatives nor friends

Dead Persian Warrior. (Marble of the Museum of Naples.)

deploring their death, and it was easy by means of largesses to persuade the survivors that they had just completed a skilful and victorious campaign.

In truth, neither side was vanquished. The Persians might congratulate themselves on a great success, but Mesopotamia, guarded by the fortresses of Severus, was not encroached upon, not a particle of Roman territory was conquered; and, if they had exterminated one imperial army, if they had stopped the advance of another, it was not without having suffered considerable losses. So, as soon as the danger of a Roman invasion had disappeared, their irregular troops dispersed, each carrying home his booty. Yet the Persians had not attained their purpose, and the Romans

[1] The army which Alexander subsequently led into Gaul was composed of barbarians: *Omnis apparatus . . . . potentissimus quidem per Armenios et Osrhoënos et Parthos et omnis generis hominum* (Lamprid., *Alex.*, 61). Herodian (vi. 17) adds that many Moors were also found in it.

had fulfilled theirs. So far from being conquered, Roman Asia was delivered. The victory unquestionably remained with those who had obtained the result which they desired. But the two empires had come into collision once more without either of them crushing the other, and it continued so until a new element, the religious and aggressive fanaticism of the Arabs, changed the conditions of the struggle.

The second account is a song of triumph for the Romans.

Extract from the acts of the senate, the seventh day before the kalends of October; speech of the prince:

"Conscript Fathers, we have vanquished the Persians. A long discourse is unnecessary; it is only of importance that you should know what were their forces and their preparations. They had 700 elephants bearing towers filled with archers. We have captured 300 of them; 200 were killed on the spot; we have led hither eighteen. They had 1,000 chariots armed with scythes; we might have brought 200 of them, the horses of which have perished, but we did not think it necessary, because it would have been easy to present others to you. We have defeated 120,000 horsemen, and killed during the war 10,000 of their cataphracti.[2] We have captured a great number of Persians, whom we have sold. We have reconquered all the territory which is between the two rivers, Mesopotamia, which the licentious Elagábalus had allowed to be lost. We have put to rout this king Artaxerxes, whom his renown and his forces rendered so formidable; and the land of the Persians has witnessed his flight, abandoning his ensigns in the same localities where we had once lost ours. This, Conscript Fathers, is what we have done. The soldiers come back rich; victory makes them forget their fatigue; it is for you now to decree supplications in testimony of our gratitude to the gods." (September 25th, 233.)

Coin Commemorative of the Congiary given by Alexander Severus.[1]

[1] LIBERALITAS AVGVSTI V SC. Alexander seated upon a stage; behind, the prefect of the prætorium and a soldier; before, Liberality; at the bottom, a citizen mounting the steps. (Large bronze. Cohen, No. 288.)

[2] Cavaliers covered with defensive armour from head to foot. See Amm. Marcellin., xvi. 10.

On the morrow, in memory of this grand success, a congiary was given to the people and they celebrated the Persian games. The eighteen elephants which were displayed there led them to believe in the 300 which they pretended to have captured.[1] There could then be no doubt of it: Rome had now renewed the glory of Severus and Trajan.[2]

Rome, at least, had an interest in this bulletin of victory being credited. Germany was uneasy. Seeing the dismantling of the camps which barred the route to Gaul and to Illyria, the barbarians had found the occasion propitious for renewing their acts of brigandage. For a long while the line of the Rhine had ceased to be threatened, so much so, that in place of the eight legions which the first emperor had kept in this quarter, they now retained only four. It had therefore been easy for the Germans to pass between the enfeebled garrisons and extend their ravages into Gaul. Hence, while waiting until the Illyrians should have returned from the East, it was well to have their return preceded by the report of a great victory. They were quite certain that the words pronounced in the senate would resound on the Rhine border.

Several months were employed in reorganizing the forces of the West, and in 234[3] Alexander set out for Gaul. After reaching the environs of Mayence with his mother, he made another effort

[1] Perhaps there may have been none at all. Lampridius (57) speaks of a car of triumph drawn by four elephants; the medals only show a chariot and four horses. (Eckhel, vii. 276.) On his side, Ardeshir attested his victory to his subjects by causing gold coins to be struck. The emperors permitted neither the provinces nor their allies to emit gold coin, the aurei with the emperor's effigy were alone in circulation; the Roman merchants could accept no others, and all trade was conducted with these coins. Procopius relates that Justinian declared war against the Arabs because they had paid the tribute in pieces of gold not bearing the imperial likeness. (*De Bello Goth.*, iii. 33; Zonaras, xiv. 22.) In the interest of the commercial relations of their subjects the Arsacids had been obliged to submit to this necessity, and had not had gold money. The Sassanids fabricated it, but in small quantity. (Mommsen, *Hist. de la monnaie romaine*, tr. Blacas, p. 16.)

[2] An inscription recently deciphered at Kef (Sicca Veneria), in Tunis (*Bullet. épigr. de la Gaule*, 1883, p. 3) mentions an offering of the *splendidissimus ordo* of the decurions, *Fortunæ Reduci Aug.*, for the triumphal return of Alexander Severus. This inscription, and another of Pesth, leads us to think that Mammæa had accompanied her son into the East, as she followed him in the expedition against the Germans; this persistence "of the avaricious mother" in remaining always at the side of the prince was no doubt one of the causes of the catastrophe which cost both of them their lives.

[3] *Profectio Aug.* (Eckhel, *vii.* 277). Lampridius (*Alex.*, 60) pretends that a Druidess told him, *Gallico sermone*, not to expect victory and not to rely on his soldiers. The Druids had fallen to the rank of sorcerers, telling fortunes. It is known that Aurelian and Diocletian consulted them to know the future.

to avoid war. He proposed peace to the Germans, gold and presents of all kinds, greatly to the disaffection of his soldiers, who wanted to keep this gold for themselves. In the army there was at that time a chief named Maximin, who had been born in the most barbarous part of Thrace. At first a shepherd, he had become a soldier, and by his lofty stature and strength he attracted attention, and had risen from grade to grade up to the command of the new levies, whose drilling Alexander had confided to him. These recruits were for the most part rough and coarse Pannonians like himself, but wholly devoted to a man who possessed their qualities and their faults, and on the contrary filled with contempt for the tranquil virtues of the emperor. Furthermore, they reckoned that the reign of Alexander had lasted long enough, that the recent war had exhausted his treasury, the remainder of which the avarice of Mammæa kept under lock and key; that, in short, there would be every advantage in a change of princes, since the new one would pay richly for his dignity, especially if they should choose Maximin, who, without noble birth or illustrious record, would owe everything entirely to them. One day they threw a purple mantle over his shoulders and marched in arms towards the imperial residence. At their approach Alexander ordered his guards to go and apprehend the culprit; they hesitate, then refuse, and allow the assassins to enter, who put to death the son and the mother,[2]

Alexander Severus.[1]

[1] Statue of heroic size, in Grecian marble. (Museum of Naples.)

[2] In the seventeenth century there was discovered at Rome, near the Porta San Giovanni Gate, the sarcophagus of Alexander Severus and Mammæa. (Cf. below, p. 313.) The bas-

or, as Herodian says, "the parsimonious woman and the pusillanimous child;"[1] some accounts make him die a cowardly death. (March 19th, 235.)

Alexander had reigned thirteen years, though his age was only twenty-six.[2] He is the last of the Syrian princes. If among them we reckon Severus, on account of the influence exercised over him by Julia Domna, this dynasty had ruled the Empire more than forty years: a brief space of time which was marked by great events and bloody tragedies, but during which completely disappeared what was left of the Roman blood and spirit. But for the jurisconsults, who preserved the especially Roman science, the customs and beliefs make us feel in the midst of an Asiatic monarchy. The Empire is inclining to the Orient, and soon will be lost in it.

The respect of Alexander for Abraham and Jesus, and the ancient relations of his mother with Origen, had rendered him favourable to the Jews and the Christians.[3] The latter enjoyed during his reign a profound peace and a sort of legal existence. In a contest which the Church of Rome had with some inn-keepers in the matter of some public land, he pronounced in favour of the Christians: "Better," said he, "that this locality should become a place of prayer than a place of debauchery."[4] He had been struck with the manner in which the Church proceeded at its sacerdotal elections, and for a moment thought of imitating it for

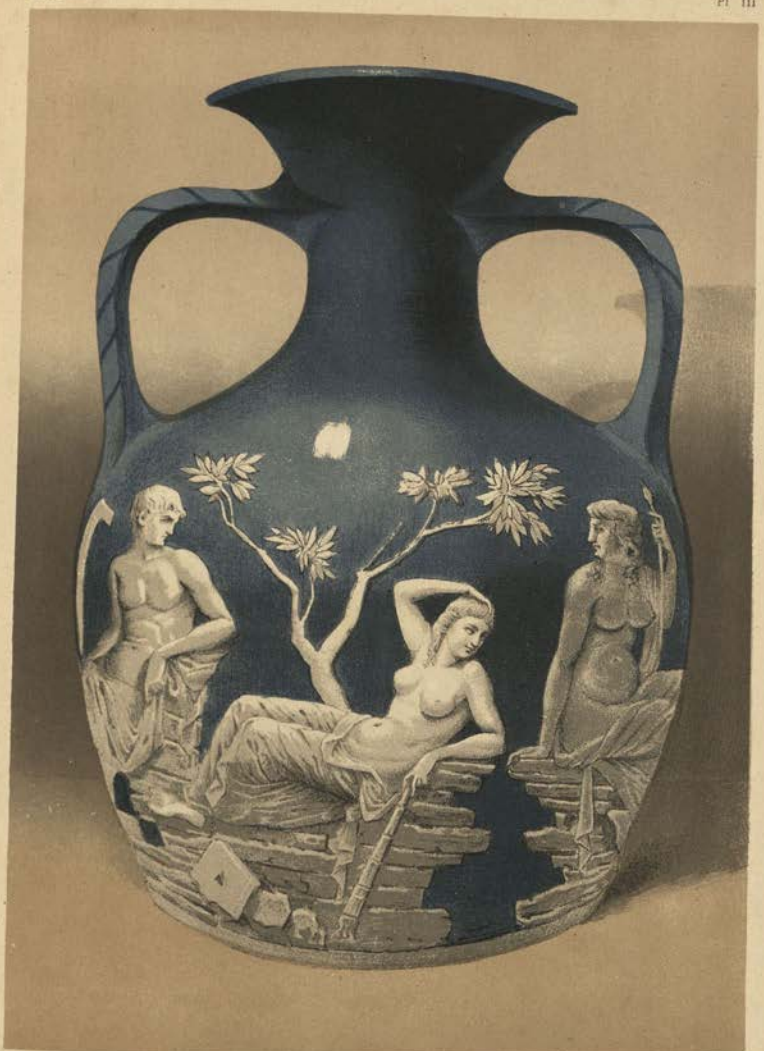
reliefs placed above the figures of the emperor and his mother represent: the dispute of Achilles and Agamemnon; the imprisonment of Chryseis; Achilles preparing to avenge the death of Patroclus; finally, Priam demanding the body of his son. This sarcophagus, which we give on page 313, contained what is called the "Portland Vase," in blue glass with white ornaments, now in the British Museum. We reproduce it in an extra plate.

[1] Julian, in the *Cæsars*, repeats this judgment.

[2] Or twenty-nine years and some months, according to Lampridius. There are doubts as to the precise date of his death. Eckhel (vii. 282) inclines to the beginning of July. To the reign of Alexander is referred an inscription of the Fratres Arvales describing a curious expiatory sacrifice, because the lightning had struck down some trees of the sacred grove of the goddess Dia. Among other victims immolated *ante Cæsareum genio d. n. Severi Alexandri Aug.*, was found a *taurus auratus; item divis num. XX vervecres XX.* These *divi* are, from another inscription of the year 183: Augustus, Julia (Livia), Claudius, Poppæa, Vespasian, Titus, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Sabina, Antoninus, Faustina the Elder, L. Verus, Marcus Aurelius, Faustina the Younger, and since Commodus, Commodus himself, Pertinax, Severus, and Caracalla. (Orelli, No. 961, after Marini, *Atti de' fratelli Arvali*, pl. 43, p. 167.)

[3] Lamprid., *Alex.*, 22.

[4] *Ibid.*, 49. This was the very expression of the Gospel: *domus mea domus orationis.*



Eubeli del. Dosso pinxit — Imp. Fraillery. — Dambourgez chromolith.

THE PORTLAND VASE,

FOUND IN THE SARCOPHAGUS OF ALEXANDER SEVERUS

Sarcophagus of Alexander Severus and Mammæa. (Museum of the Capitol.)

the functions of state.[1] Of this thought there only remained, as we have seen, the invitation given to the people to denounce the faults of the candidates proposed for the offices. Lampridius pretends that Alexander wanted to build a temple to Christ, to enrol him in the ranks of the gods, and that the priests dissuaded him from it, declaring, on the faith of the sacred books, that if he executed this project, the other temples would be abandoned.[2] That might be said of Constantine, but could not be of the son of Mammæa, the Christians at that time not being sufficiently numerous to inspire this apprehension. However, they profited by the tolerance of Alexander to build their first churches, which are shortly afterwards mentioned by Origen.[3]

Coin of Mammæa in the Likeness of Juno.[4]

Of Mammæa they have also made a Christian; a singular Christian, this empress called on her coins the beneficent Juno, to whom the senate decreed an apotheosis, and for whom they instituted a festival which the pagans celebrated as late as the fourth century![5] Like her son, she had desired to become acquainted with the new faith,[6] and many had that curiosity. Eusebius relates that a governor of the province of Arabia requested the bishop of Alexandria and the prefect of Egypt to send Origen to him, that he might confer with him about the new doctrine.[7]

The reign of this young and unfortunate prince, to whom in spite of his weakness we must accord a peculiar regard, was then the moment when the past and the future, the two great social forces, could come together without mingling, and live in peace until the transformation should be effected.[8] In fact, a compromise was not impossible between the Empire, now become disdainful

[1] Lamprid., *Alex.*, 45.

[2] *Id., ibid.*, 42.

[3] *In Matth. hom.*, xxviii. Origen says that they were burned, probably during the reign of Maximin.

[4] IVNO CONSERVATRIX. Juno standing, holding a patera and a sceptre; a peacock is at her feet. Reverse of a silver coin.

[5] Lamprid., *Alex.*, 26. All her medals are pagan.

[6] Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, vi. 21.

[7] *Id., ibid.*, vi. 19.

[8] Zonaras (xii. 16) pretends that there were many Christians at the court of Alexander: . . . . πολλοὶ κατὰ τοῦ Ἀλ. οἶκον ἦσαν τὸν Χριστὸν ἐπεγνωκότες θεόν. Mangold, *de Ecclesia primæva pro Cæsaribus ac magistratibus rom. preces fundente*, 1881, thinks that in the first two

of its old divinities, and a Christianity which would have been respectful towards the established order. The one accepting religious tolerance as its rule of government, the other, satisfied with the liberty allowed it, continuing peaceably to win souls, but not gaining power by violence; making conquest of the world by virtue of moral truth and not as a victorious party which establishes itself by force in the positions from whence it has dislodged its adversaries. Unhappily, the revolutions of this world are not effected with this wisdom. The spirit of Tertullian has replaced in the Church that of Clement, and in the State the violent will also succeed the pacific. On both sides, force will be employed; by Diocletian, in the name of the gods; by the successors of Constantine, in the name of Christ, and the Empire will be shaken to its foundations.

centuries liturgical prayers for the emperors and magistrates were said in the Christian communities.

[1] This Medusa is carved on the outside of the famous cup of Oriental sardonyx, known as the Tassa Farnese. It was found near the Castle of S. Angelo (Hadrian's Tomb), or at the Tiburtine Villa, and is now in the Museum of Naples.

Medusa, or Ægis.[1]

TWELFTH PERIOD.

MILITARY ANARCHY (235-268 A.D.). BEGINNING OF THE DECLINE.

CHAPTER XCIV.

SEVEN EMPERORS IN FOURTEEN YEARS (235-249 A.D.).

I.—MAXIMIN (235-238); GORDIAN I. AND GORDIAN II.; PUPIENUS AND BALBINUS (238).

AS the Roman aristocracy and the provincial nobles abandoned military service, the sons of barbarians entered it, and, reaching the higher grades, disposed of the troops and consequently of the Empire.

Caius Julius Verus Maximinus by his father's side belonged to the Getæ; by his mother's, to the Alani. When Severus, on his return from Asia in the year 202, traversed Thrace, he celebrated, on occasion of a festival, the usual military games. Maximin, whose herculean strength had made him famous among his comrades, was matched against some of the emperor's attendants, and conquered sixteen of them in succession. This prowess gained him the honour of being at once enlisted in the army. Three days later, seeing the emperor pass on horseback at full gallop, he kept pace with him on foot. Severus continued the race for some time, then proposed to him to take part in a wrestling match, fatigued as he was. Immediately Maximin threw seven of the most active soldiers one after another, and upon this received the gold collar and was admitted to the guards. This new Ajax,

who was as brave as he was strong, rose rapidly through the grades, but would serve neither under Macrinus, who had killed the son of his benefactor, nor under Elagabalus, whom he despised —two praiseworthy sentiments which should be set down to his

Maximin.[1] (Museum of Naples.)

Maximus (Son of Maximin).[2]

credit. He re-entered the army in the reign of Alexander, who made him tribune with the rank of senator. The rest of the story is well-known. Disgusted with an emperor whom his mother held in leading-strings, the troops were eager to have a true soldier at their head, and they made choice of the man who possessed all the physical qualities of one—strength, agility, and dexterity.[3] His

[1] Heroic statue, the antique head preserved. (Luni marble.)

[2] Statue of Greek marble, the antique head restored.

[3] I make no mention of the extravagant stories of his strength and voracity. They are credible only on the supposition that Maximin was a morbid case of polyphagy, of which Létourneau gives such curious instances in his *Physiologie des passions*.

son Maximus, not yet twenty years of age,[1] was saluted Cæsar and prince of the Roman youth.

The extraordinary fortune to which Maximin had attained did did not remove from his mind the consciousness of his own unworthiness, and placed him in an attitude of hostility towards all who possessed what he had never had, ancestors, a name, education, and wealth. He dared not appear in Rome. This city full of glorious memories, this senate of which he was not yet an actual member,[2] an assembly remaining still the shadow of a great reality, intimidated the barbarian. The friends and councillors of Alexander, all his household, and among this number many Christians, were at once put to death; soon after a conspiracy, real or feigned, cost the life of Magnus, an ex-consul, and of several other persons.[4] In the army were many troops of African and Asiatic origin, Osrhoenian and Armenian archers, Moors armed with javelins, Parthians who had fled from the Persian dominion, all devoted to the dynasty which had arisen out of Leptis and Emesa. The favourite of the Pannonians and the murderer of Alexander was doubly odious to them; it was their desire to overthrow him and proclaim as emperor, against his will, an ex-consul whom one of his friends assassinated through spite at not having had the preference himself. This murder disorganized the rebellion; new victims fell, and

Maximus, Cæsar and Prince of the Youth.[3]

Germans concealing themselves among Rushes. (Column of Antoninus.)

[1] Maximus was killed in his eighteenth or in his twenty-first year. (Capit., *Max.*, 1.)

[2] MAXIMVS CÆS. GERM., around the bare head of the prince. On the reverse, PRINC. IVVENTVTIS. Maximus standing, holding a wand and a javelin; behind, two standards. (Silver coin. Cohen, No. 4.)

[3] *Neque ipse senator esset* (Eutrop., ix. 1).

[4] Capitolinus says, four thousand. (*Max.*, 10.)

Maximin made haste to seek sanction for his power by gaining a victory over the Germans.

These barbarians made no resistance to a serious attack. Abandoning to the Romans their harvests and their wooden houses, which were burned, they took refuge in the depths of forests, whither they believed the legions would not dare to follow them, and in marshes through which they alone knew the way. Maximin, however, pursued them into these retreats, killed a considerable number of them and sent to the senate, with his letters announcing the victory, a picture representing himself as fighting surrounded by enemies, while the horse upon which he is seated is half buried in the mud. He asserted that he had ravaged the country over a space of 400 miles. Other wars, of which we have no particulars, gave him the titles of Dacicus and Sarmaticus. From Sirmium, which he had made the centre of his operations, he commanded the line of the Carpathians, and proposed to penetrate as far as the northern seas: this son of the Goths was desirous of crushing that barbarism whence he had himself emerged.[2]

Maximinus Germanicus.[1]

A design like this, and a life passed in the camps of the Danube in rigorous climates, give the man a certain savage grandeur. But the senators left idle in the curia, the languid dwellers in Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, who, from the recesses of their luxurious villas could not discern the perils that the north concealed in its mysterious depths, and the populace, deprived of their wonted pleasures, were indignant at the affront offered to the imperial purple. Maximin was called the Cyclops, the Busiris, the wild beast; men openly desired his death, and in the theatre verses were declaimed like these: "The elephant is huge, but men kill him; the lion is strong, but men kill him; the tiger is

[1] Laurelled head of Maximin. On the reverse, Maximin and his son, standing, holding a victory. Between them, two kneeling captives. (Large bronze of the *Cabinet de France*.)

[2] In 256 he assumed the title of Germanicus (Eckhel, vii. 291). His victories over the Germans belong therefore to that year.

terrible, but men kill him. Beware of all, thou who fearest none; for what one alone cannot do, many together can." The rude soldier gave back contempt for contempt to the effeminate revilers whose hands could not grasp the sword, to these crowds living on charity and public games, who had never seen other blood flow than that of gladiators, while the emperor replied by sentences of death to those who insulted him. Notwithstanding the efforts of the empress, who strove vainly to soften this savage disposition,[1] murders and confiscations multiplied, and hatred increased against the Thracian who dared to say openly that an Empire like this could be governed only by the most uncompromising severity.

This hatred Maximin discerned everywhere, even amidst flatteries, and his cruelty only increased in consequence. Those even who had aided his fortunes became guilty of having known his humble beginnings, and he caused these embarrassing witnesses of his obscurity to disappear. As there was safety for him nowhere except with the army, he gorged it with gold, and the public treasury not furnishing enough, he pillaged cities and temples, coined the statues of the gods into money and confiscated the funds destined for games and distributions; citizens were slain while endeavouring to defend the statues of their divinities. A catastrophe was becoming inevitable, and an eclipse of the sun which occurred at this time was believed to announce it.

About the middle of February, 238,[2] an insurrection of peasants broke out in Africa. One of the most obnoxious of the agents of this fiscal tyranny, the procurator of the province of Carthage, had condemned many landowners of Thysdrus to fines which were ruinous to them. They applied for a delay of three days, and employed that time in calling in from the adjacent country their

[1] Amm. Marcellinus, xiv. 1.

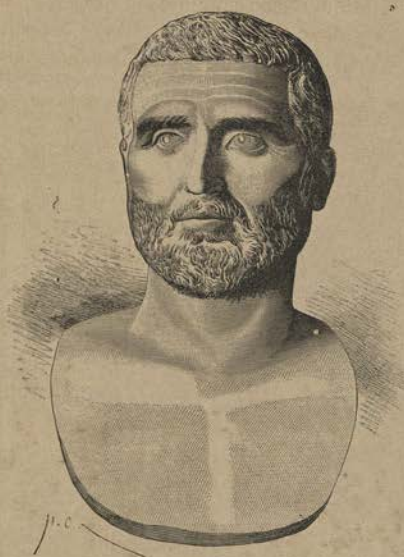
[2] This period presents serious chronological difficulties, which have been removed by Eckhel (vii. 293-5), and by Borghesi (*Sull' imp. Pupiano*, in his Works, v. pp. 488 *et seq.*), and especially by L. Renier. In the latter's memoir upon the inscriptions of the Gordians, he establishes, moreover, that Capellianus was in command in Numidia, and not, as has been always believed, in Mauretania; that the Third Augustan legion was disbanded after its defeat; that the true name of Balbinus was Decimus Cælius Galvinus Balbinus (no inscription had given it until that of Bouhira, recently discovered); that, finally, a rescript inserted in the *Code* (ii. 10, 2) proves that Pupienus and Balbinus were dead by the tenth before the kalends of July (June 22). In the reorganization of Africa by Gordian III. the Numidian lieutenancy was suppressed, and Cæsarian Mauretania became, and remained until the time of Valerian, a prætorian province, governed by a legate who commanded the entire army in the African provinces.

husbandmen, who entered the city by night, armed with clubs and hatchets concealed under their clothing. At break of day the conspirators with this band attacked the dwelling of the proconsul, killed him, and then hastening to the dwelling of the procurator, who was at this time in Thysdrus, they invested him with a purple robe, and, in spite of his reluctance, proclaimed him

Thysdrus (El-Djem): View of a Circular Gallery in the Amphitheatre or Colosseum.

Augustus. Gordian was the person of highest rank in the Empire. He was said to be a descendant of the Gracchi; his mother, Ulpia Gordiana, belonged to the family of Trajan; and his wife was the great-granddaughter of Antoninus Pius. He was, moreover, a scholar, a poet, and a man of integrity; he had immense wealth, but he was eighty years of age, and content with having passed through so many revolutions without loss of life or fortune, this

assiduous reader of Plato and Aristotle, of Cicero and Virgil,[1] would have been glad to end his days peacefully. But the choice was not allowed him. Moreover to touch the imperial purple,



The Elder Gordian. (Bust of the Capitol, Hall of the Emperors, No. 64.)

though but for a moment, was to be like him of old who laid hand upon the Ark, his life must be the penalty.

Gordian accepted, and Carthage, which had not seen an emperor since Hadrian, received with transport the new Augustus. He associated with himself his son, who had been one of his

[1] Gordian had composed a poetical Antoniniad. Capitolinus thus describes one of his palaces: "In their villa, which yet stands upon the Prænestine road, may be seen a tetrastyle temple of two hundred columns, of which fifty are of Carystian marble, fifty of Claudian, and fifty of Numidian; there are also three basilicas a hundred feet in length, and thermæ, which are surpassed in beauty only by those of Rome." (*Gord.*, 32.) "While ædile, Gordian gave at his own expense twelve spectacles, one each month, where gladiators in number from three hundred to a thousand were engaged. On one occasion he let loose in the amphitheatre a hundred wild beasts of Libya; another time, a thousand bears. At the August games he furnished to the populace two hundred stags, thirty wild horses, ten elands, a hundred Cyprus bulls, three hundred ostriches, thirty wild asses, a hundred and fifty wild boars, two hundred chamois, and two hundred deer." (*Ibid.*, 3.)

lieutenants, and immediately despatched emissaries to Rome with letters for the consuls, the senate, the people, and the prætorians, and assassins to destroy the prætorian prefect, the pitiless agent of the cruelties of Maximin. They also were to spread the false

The Younger Gordian. (Bust of the Capitol, Hall of the Emperors, No. 65.)

rumour that the emperor had been murdered in camp in Pannonia. The prefect being attacked unawares was stabbed in his own tribunal. In his letter to the senate Gordian declared that he would submit to the decision of that august assembly. Since the time of the true Antonines the Conscript Fathers had not heard language like this. It gave them courage, and without waiting to

see if the imperial offices were really vacant, they decreed them to the two Gordians, father and son, in a secret session[1] (March, 238). The people were, for once, of the same mind with the senate; a ruler who scorned to come to Rome appeared to them false to all his duties. They rejoiced therefore at the report of Maximin's death, and welcomed with acclamations the emperor whom the Fathers had given them. The revolution would have failed of its chief interest if it had been on paper only; a sanguinary reaction smote the officers and partisans of the Thracian and the informers who had served his cruelty. Under this pretext every man rid himself of an enemy, and debtors murdered their creditors. The prefect of the city perished in one of these tumults.

Unique Inscription of the Elder Gordian.[2] (Museum of Bordeaux.)

Meanwhile messengers had been sent out to communicate to the provinces the impulse which had begun with Rome and Carthage. Their despatches, written in the name of the senate and the Roman people, called upon the nations to succour the common country and acknowledge the two rulers who had just freed the world of a wild beast.[3] Maximin at first ridiculed these new "Carthaginians," and promised his soldiers that this revolt of the senate should give them rich booty. There was, in truth, nothing of Hannibal in the Carthage of the time, and when the Numidian legate, Capellianus, arrived from Lambesa and Thevestes with his legion, the Third Augustan, the citizens who had come out to oppose him gave way at sight of the Numidian horse, and in their precipitate flight

[1] For a *senatus-consultum tacitum*, the scribes and attendants, all, in fact, who were not senators, went out of the curia, and the members of the senate themselves prepared the reports and decrees.

[2] From the restoration by M. Ch. Robert, in vol. iv. of *Mémoires de la Société archéolog.* of Bordeaux.

[3] The letter is addressed: *proconsulibus, præsidibus, legatis, ducibus, tribunis, magistratibus, ac singulis civitatibus, et municipiis et oppidis et vicis et castellis.* (Capit., *Max.*, 15.) The two Maximins were at the same time declared public enemies, and a reward offered to any person who should kill them. (*Ibid.*, 16.)

crushed one another in the gates of the city.[1] The younger Gordian was slain in the tumult, and his aged father in despair took his own life; the two had reigned a few days over a month. This news struck consternation at Rome. Embarked in so terrible an enterprise the senate could not fall back; it was compelled to be either the victim or the executioner.

Ideas which later were more fully developed had begun at

Ruins of the Tomb of the Gordians (from a Photograph by Parker).

this time to germinate. In the time of Caracalla Herodian had believed that a division of the Empire was possible. In the deliberation which took place after the arrival of the news from Africa, a senator proposed the appointment of two emperors, one to remain at Rome and have charge of civil affairs, the other to be with the army for the direction of military operations. This was the system which Diocletian carried out. The proposal was well

[1] Capitolinus (*Max.*, 19) speaks, however, of an *acerrima pugna*.

received, and the senate proclaimed two *Augusti*, Pupienus,[1] a military man, and Balbinus, who had won honour in the civil career. To render these powers absolutely equal, the title of Pontifex Maximus, which had never before been shared, was given to both, and the two Gordians were pronounced *divi*.

A great crowd had gathered outside the Capitol when the senate was in session. At the news of the decision a violent clamour was raised, especially against Pupienus, who as governor of the city had severely repressed those infractions of the public order that the lower classes so willingly commit or excuse. Accordingly, when the new emperors with their suite attempted to go the imperial palace, they were driven back into the Capitol. The Gordians being extremely rich had many adherents who had proposed to derive advantage for themselves from their reign. Of this family there remained a boy—grandson through his mother of the proconsul of Africa[2]—who was at this time in Rome. Upon the elevation of his grandfather and uncle the senate had given him the prætorship and the title of Cæsar, although he was but twelve years of age. After the African disaster men were in request, and the boy was forgotten, but those whose interests were concerned had not forgotten him, and they instigated the mob, who by their clamour

The Two Gordians, proclaimed *divi*.[2]

Gordian III. Cæsar. (Silver Coin bearing on the reverse the legend: *Pietas Augg.* Cohen, No. 73.)

[1] Their names were: *M. Clodius Pupienus Maximus* and *Decimus Cælius Balbinus*. The latter claimed descent from Balbus, the Spaniard, the friend of Pompey and Cæsar.

[2] Medallion of bronze struck at Ægæ in Cilicia, confirming the apotheosis decreed by the senate: *quos ambo senatus augustos appellavit, et postea inter divos retulit.* On the obverse, the laurelled heads of the two Gordians facing each other; the legend (in Greek): The Divine Gordiani, the venerable Roman, African, Augusti. On the reverse, an eagle upon an altar, and: The inhabitants of Ægæ, Severiani, Hadriani, the neocoros city (having a temple of the Augusti), the navarchia (having a marine arsenal), in the year of Ægæ 284 (238 A.D.).

[3] An Algerian inscription (L. Renier, No. 1,431) calls him *divi Gordiani nepos et divi Gordiani sororis filius*. To the same effect, Herodian, vii. 27.

forced the senate to renew the decree naming the young Gordian Cæsar.

So Rome had three emperors; but she had civil war

Balbinus. (Bust of the Capitol.)

nevertheless. Maximin had left in the city only a few prætorian veterans, and this soldiery, whose insolence we have often mentioned, was always regarded with ill-will by the nobles and the populace. One day two of these soldiers, unarmed and as spectators, entering the temple where the Conscript Fathers were deliberating,

passed beyond the altar of Victory, a serious breach of etiquette. To this they added some insolent demeanour, or possibly some threatening language in the name of their emperor: the exact offence is not known; but an exasperated senator stabbed them both, then rushing out into the open square held up his bloody dagger, exclaiming that it must needs be that these enemies of the

Maximin. (Bust in the Museum of the Louvre.)

senate and of the Roman people perish. The crowd fell upon the prætorians who chanced to be in the city; many were killed, and the remainder shut themselves into their camp, which the gladiators belonging to the nobles vainly sought to take by attack; these old soldiers made a strong resistance, and at times sallied out with great slaughter among their assailants. To restore peace Balbinus issued edicts and entreaties, but he was driven out of the tumult with sticks and stones, but without intentional injury. The affair

was a private quarrel between town and camp, of a kind often seen before and since in military governments. The citizens finally cut off the water supply of the camp, hoping to force the prætorians

Pupienus. (Bust in the Museum of the Louvre.)

to open their gates. The latter did indeed open them, but it was to fall upon the mob with levelled pikes, and pursue them into the city, where the combat went on. Assailed in the narrow streets by stones hurled down upon them from the roofs, the soldiers set fire to the houses, and in the midst of the conflagration

soldiers and populace became reconciled, while uniting to plunder whatever the flames had spared. A great part of the city was destroyed.

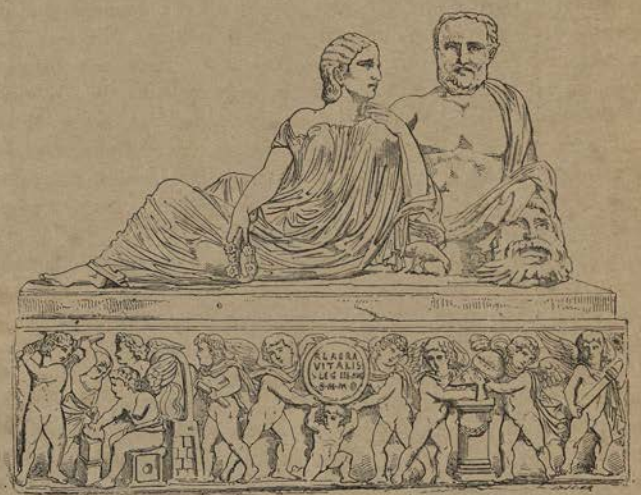
Maximin now found himself in the position in which Severus had been forty-five years before; but he did not show the prudence of the African emperor, and his army, having no supplies awaiting them along the road, advanced slowly. It is true the disposition of the provincials was no longer the same; the inhabitants fled at the approach of Maximin and his barbarians, and the cities which he entered were empty of men and provisions.[1]

The senate had time therefore to raise troops in Italy, to fortify positions, and to cut the roads. The fleet of Ravenna had carried off or destroyed all the coast vessels, and allowed nothing to arrive by way of the Adriatic for the army of Pannonia.[2] Twenty ex-consuls had divided Italy among themselves, to make it a fortress as it were, and from Ravenna, where he had collected his army, Pupienus directed the movements of all. This city, the Venice of the Romans, afforded him an excellent strategic position. Thence he kept guard over Upper Italy and the lower course of its two great rivers, the Po and the Adige; his fleet kept him in communication with Aquileia, and he covered the road to Rome. The Italians cordially aided his preparations; they felt that they were about to fight for the old renown of Italy against a fresh invasion of the Cimbri. The gods were made to speak: in Aquileia the auspices declared that Belenus promised success.[3] Moreover, good news came in from the provinces. Most of them had declared for the senate, and the legions which remained faithful, especially those of the Rhine where Pupienus had been in command, sent him detachments which enabled him to officer a considerable number of recruits. In Africa, Capellianus, after his victory at Carthage, had pillaged the province to enrich his soldiers, to prepare his own way to the imperial power if Maximin should be overthrown.[4] But the governor of Mauretania defeated and killed him; the Third Augustan legion was disbanded; its name was effaced from the

[1] *Sublatis omnibus quæ victum præbere possent* (Capit., *Max.*, 21).
[2] Capit., *Max.*, 23.
[3] *Id., ibid.*, 22; Herod., viii. 7.
[4] Capit., *Max.*, 19. Cf. L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.*, 3,177.

monuments it had erected, and the troops remaining were sent into Rhætia.[1] Maximin, therefore, remained isolated.[2]

When he reached the banks of the Isonzo, the torrent, swelled by the melting of the snows, rolled broad and rapid, and the fine



Sarcophagus of a Centurion of the Third Augustan Legion.[3] (Museum of the Louvre.)

stone bridge which spanned it had been broken down. Here the army was detained for several days while rafts were constructed from casks and planks found in the deserted houses.

On the opposite side, some miles distant from the stream, was Aquileia, the real gateway into Italy on this side. Whether

[1] This legion was reconstituted about the year 253, in the reign of Valerian, whom it, with the whole Rhætian army, had aided in obtaining the imperial power.

[2] . . . . *orbem terrarum consensisse in odium Maximini* (Capit., *Max.*, 23).

[3] White marble, found among the tombs along the Appian Way. It represents eleven Loves forging arms, in allusion to the employment of the centurion: *Blaera Vitalis* 7 (centurio) *leg. III. AVG. B. M. M. D.* [*Bene Merenti Mater Dedit?*]. (*C. I. L.*, vol. vi. No. 3,645.) "The artists of the Roman epoch were accustomed to treat religious traditions lightly, and attribute to Loves or to children certain occupations which in reality only belong to grown men. In this class of ideas the sarcophagus under consideration is one of the most instructive." (Fröhner, *Notice*, etc., No. 341, and p. 321; also Henry d'Escamps, *Descr. des marbres du musée Camp.*, pl. 108.)

Maximin should take it, or whether its inhabitants should allow him to traverse it with his famished hordes, in either case the great and wealthy city would be ruined. Accordingly these descendants of Roman colonists had resolved to make a desperate resistance. They closed the gaps in their walls, amassed immense quantities of provisions, and prepared all military supplies. The women, copying famous examples, had given their hair to make rope, an act consecrated by a temple built in Rome to the Venus of the shaven head. Two ex-consuls, one formerly a *dux* in Mœsia, and a very able soldier, conducted the defence. There were but few troops in the city, but all the inhabitants enrolled themselves as a garrison, and the bravest of the neighbouring country people had thrown themselves into the place.

They were able to defeat all designs and to repel all attacks, and set on fire the besieging machines employed by the enemy. Maximin, exasperated by these repeated defeats, finally put to death the officers who had so unsuccessfully conducted his affairs. Great indignation was aroused at this unjust conduct; provisions, moreover, were lacking, the army saw neither supplies nor succour come to it, the whole Empire appeared to be hostile, and the emperor was not one of those leaders who give their soldiers courage to fight against a world.

The soldiers of the Second Parthica were the most uneasy. Their wives and children and all that they possessed being left at Albano was at the mercy of their adversaries. To save them the soldiers murdered Maximin and his son. This emperor's reign had lasted three years and a few days (238).[1]

Upon this the army demanded entrance into the city, but the people of Aquileia would by no means agree to this. They let down provisions from their walls, requiring pay for the same, and also opened markets at their gates, and the strange sight was seen

[1] Maximin was sixty-five years of age (*Chron. d'Alex.*, *ad ann.* 238, and Zonaras, *Ann.*, xii. 16). The ecclesiastical writers (Euseb., *Hist. eccl.*, vi. 28) place in his reign a persecution, which they call the sixth. Sulpicius Severus has no knowledge of this; he speaks only (*Hist. sacr.*, ii. 16) of a few priests who were persecuted . . . . *nonnullarum ecclesiarum clericos vexavit*. The persecution was probably limited to some local oppression. In Cappadocia, for instance, of which Firmilianus was bishop. Cf. Cyprian, *Ep.* 75: *erat transeundi facultas eo quod persecutio illa non per totum mundum, sed localis fuisset . . . . ut per Cappadociam et Pontum;* and the Church has no authentic martyrs in this reign. Eusebius mentions not one.

of the besieged supplying the besiegers with food. Pupienus coming in all haste from Ravenna to this army destitute of a chief, received their oaths of fidelity to the three emperors of Rome, and sent the troops away to their encampments, after having, as was fitting, paid them liberally in gold the price of blood.

During these transactions the senate had lived from day to day in all the anxieties of a man who sees the knife at his throat.

Equestrian Statue of an Emperor crowned with Laurel.
(Guattani, 1786, and Clarac, pl. 967, No. 2,497.)

Therefore their joy was as extreme as had been their terror, and they testified it by the vastness of their display of gratitude to the gods and the emperors; to the former, solemn thanksgivings and hecatombs of victims; to the latter, triumphs without a combat, trophies, triumphal chariots, gilded equestrian statues, and, by way of novelty, statues carried by elephants.

When the noise of acclamations had ceased and the flames of sacrifice were extinguished, Pupienus calmly examined the situation, and found it still full of dangers. "What do you

Heroic Statue of Pupienus. (Museum of the Louvre.)

expect will be our recompense for having delivered Rome from a monster?" he one day asked his colleague. "The love of the people, the senate, and the whole human race," Balbinus replied with simplicity. "Our recompense will be," the old general said, "the hatred of the soldiers." And he saw the real consequence.

Pupienus and the Public Peace.[1]

The two emperors at first lived on terms of cordial friendliness; to attest their harmony they caused coins to be struck representing two hands clasped with the legend: *patres senatus, amor mutuus;* also this: *fides mutua.*[2] But Balbinus regarded with contempt the obscure birth of Pupienus, the latter despised his colleague's weakness, and after a few days distrust sprang up between them. It was difficult for the combination devised by the senate to have had any other result, and this result was sure to bring about a catastrophe. The prætorians with silent hatred endured "the senate's emperors," and their hatred increased with the acclamations wherewith the Conscript Fathers saluted these men chosen by the supreme council of the state. They feared lest there might be renewed against themselves the execution made by Severus in the case of the prætorians of Julianus. In a senatus-consultum these words had been imprudently used: "Thus act those rulers who have been chosen by wise men; thus perish the rulers who were chosen by the inexperienced."[4] This

Two Hands Clasped with the Legend: PATRES SENATUS. (Silver Coin of Pupienus.)

Large Bronze of Balbinus.[3]

[1] IMP. CAES. PVPIEN(*us*) MAXIMVS AVG., around the laurelled head of the emperor. On the reverse, PAX PVBLICA SC. and Peace, seated. (Large bronze.)

[2] Eckhel, vii. 305.

[3] IMP. CAES D(*ecimus*) CAEL(*ius*) BALBINVS AVG., and the laurelled head of Balbinus. On the reverse, LIBERALITAS AVGVSTORVM SC. Balbinus, Pupienus, and Gordian III. seated on a platform. Liberalitas standing; a citizen ascending the steps.

[4] Herod., viii. 21.

was a bravado, and the soldiers comprehended it. One day when scenic representations had drawn away from the palace a large number of its usual guards they hastened thither. Pupienus desired at once to summon the German guard; Balbinus, suspecting some treachery on the part of his colleague, refused to allow it to be called in. While the two emperors were disputing, the prætorians forced the gates, seized them both, and dragged them across the city with every insult, exclaiming: "Here are the emperors of the senate and the Roman people!"[1] It was their intention to carry their prisoners to the camp to put them to death with slow tortures. But the German guard approaching, the prætorians murdered the emperors at once and left their dead bodies in the open street (June, 238).

Less than five months had sufficed for the triple tragedy of which Rome, Carthage, and the camp of Aquileia had been the theatre. The senatorial restoration had lasted just long enough to give the soldiery time to recover from the surprise this audacious attempt had caused them, and it could last no longer, for the senate had neither material nor moral force; the power was elsewhere. From Commodus to Diocletian the soldiers were the true masters of the Empire, and the evils of this dominion were only for the moment dispelled when the army had at its head chiefs at once able and strong, like Severus, Aurelian, and Probus. The constitution of the Empire required for prosperity a strong hand at the helm, but nature is not so lavish of superior men; and human wisdom had not by good institutions supplied what nature did not furnish.

[1] With the reign of Pupienus and Balbinus ends the work of Herodian, which, notwithstanding all its faults, is very useful for this epoch so poor in historians. We mention, for the year 238, the publication of the book by Censorinus, *de Die natali*. About this time also Commodianus, the most ancient of the Christian poets, wrote his *Instructions*, eighty pieces of barbarous verse. His *Carmen apologeticum* is of the year 249. Gennadius (*de Script. eccles.*, 15) says of this author: . . . . *Scripsit, mediocri sermone quasi versu, librum adversus paganos. Et quia parum nostrarum attigerat litterarum, magis illorum destruere potuit dogmata quam nostra firmare.* The initial letters of the twenty-six last verses form these words: *Commodianus mendicus Christi.* Another example of these acrostics, with a barbaric prosody and metre, is found in an Algerian inscription. (L. Renier, No. 2,074.)

II.—Gordian III. (238–244).

Within a few months six emperors had perished, and only a boy was left, Gordian III.[1] The murderers carried him away with them to the camp. They had made him Cæsar through hatred of Pupienus and Balbinus; now that he was left alone they proclaimed him Augustus; a ruler twelve or thirteen years old was the chief who suited them best. Meanwhile the Empire, wearied out with so many tumults, rested tranquil for a few years. There is mentioned only an insurrection in Africa, which was quickly suppressed by the governor of Cæsarian Mauretania (240).[2] But affairs at court went badly. Gordian II. had had as many as twenty-two concubines; to guard this harem he had adopted the Oriental method of employing eunuchs, and his nephew came into possession of this dangerous household. Ill-defended by his mother against them and the freedmen, Gordian allowed them to be masters of the palace and the treasury, which they plundered at will. Their

Gordian III.[3]

[1] "He is said by most authorities to have been eleven years of age, but some consider him thirteen, and Junius Cordus believes that he was sixteen." (Capit., *Gord.*, 22.)

[2] L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.*, 99, and *C. I. L.*, vol. vi. No. 1,090.

[3] Luni marble. Bust in the Museum of the Louvre.

sway lasted till 241 or 242; at this period the young emperor married Tranquillina, the daughter of Timesitheus, and appointed his father-in-law prætorian prefect.[1]

This Timesitheus, who had filled with integrity important financial positions, and many times served as governor of a province, *vice præsidis*, proved to be a man, and he thrust back into obscurity those who ought never to have emerged thence. One of his letters to Gordian shows the extent of the evil and the vigour of the remedy: "To Augustus, my master and my son, Timesitheus his father-in-law and prefect [greeting]. We rejoice to see that you have escaped from the disgrace of this age in which eunuchs and men whom you regarded as friends trafficked infamously in all things. Our rejoicing is the greater in that you yourself applaud this fortunate change, which proves also, my respected son, that you were not to blame for these abuses. It could not indeed be endured longer that eunuchs should dispose of military commands; that honourable services should be left unrewarded; that the caprice or interest of a few men should cause the innocent to perish and set free the guilty; that the treasury should be emptied by those who were constantly scheming to prejudice you against the best citizens, who were bringing the wicked forward and driving good men away, and trafficked in the very words that they themselves ascribed to you. Let us,

The Empress Tranquillina as Ceres. (Statue in the Museum of the Louvre. Parian Marble.)

[1] *C. Furius Sabinius Aquila Timesitheus.* (Spon, *Antiq. de Lyon*, edition of 1857, p. 163.) See his *cursus honorum* in De Boissieu's *Inscr. de Lyon*, p. 245.

therefore, thank the gods who have given you the will to heal the woes of the state. It is pleasing to be the father-in-law of a ruler who is willing to know all, and drives from his presence the men by whom he himself seemed formerly to be offered for public sale."

To this letter Gordian replied: "The emperor Gordianus Augustus to Timesitheus, his father and prefect. If the mighty gods were not protecting the Roman Empire, we should still be, as it were, exposed for sale by the eunuchs, themselves bought in the public markets. I at last understand that it is not a Felix whom I should place at the head of the prætorian cohorts, nor a Serapammon in command of the Fourth legion, and, not to enumerate in detail, that I ought not to have done many things that I have done. But I render thanks to the gods that you, whose fidelity is well known to me, have taught me what the captivity in which I was held had prevented me from understanding. What could I do when Maurus sold the government, and when, acting in concert with Gaudianus, Reverendus, and Montanus, he praised these men and blamed those? What could I do but approve what he had told me, it being also confirmed by the testimony of his accomplices? In truth, my dear father, an emperor is very unfortunate when the truth is concealed from him. He cannot go out and learn it for himself, and he is obliged to hear what he is told and to decide according to the information men bring him."

Coin of Tranquillina.[1]

Timesitheus was not only renowned for his eloquence and integrity, but also, when the occasion required, he could show himself a good general. He caused the fortifications of cities and frontiers to be repaired, and collected vast quantities of provisions in these strongholds, so that the armies could be supplied from them in case of need. The posts of the first importance were supplied with a year's stores of corn, pork, vinegar, barley, and

[1] SABINIA TRANQVILLINA AVG., surrounding the bust of the empress. On the reverse, FELICITAS TEMPORVM SC. Felicitas standing.

straw; and others with supplies for one or two months. He investigated the condition of the arsenals and made sure that the weapons in the soldiers' hands were in good order. He sent away

Provision and Baggage Waggons. (Bas-relief of the Antonine Column.)

from the camps all useless persons, old men and children, who hindered the movements of the troops and consumed the rations. Discipline was the more easily maintained because he watched with the utmost vigilance over the needs of the soldier, and even in the most remote marches secured the seasonable arrival of provisions. He also revived the old usage of surrounding the most temporary camps with a ditch; and as he visited the outposts often, even during the night, he kept watch upon the conduct of all. In a short time a man like this, able and devoted to the public welfare, restored their military virtues to the troops, and the army again became the formidable weapon that it had so long been.

Coin of Shapur or Sapor I.[1]

Of this the Persians became aware. Satisfied or exhausted by the first collision which had taken place in the reign of Alexander Severus, they had remained tranquil until about the close of Maximin's reign; but new Asiatic dynasties do not at once abandon

[1] Bust of Sapor, with legend: The worshipper of Ormuzd. On the reverse, a pyre between two standing figures; legend: Chapouri. (Gold coin.)

the tent for the harem. To consolidate their power they have need from time to time to give scope for the warlike ardour which gave them their existence. Ardeshir again threatened Armenia and the Roman provinces. Upon his death in 240 he was succeeded by his son Shapur, or Sapor, who for a third of a century (240-273) remained the indefatigable enemy of the Romans. This monarch directed a formidable invasion which penetrated the heart of Syria. He took the strong cities of Atra, Nisibis, and Carrhæ, crossed the Euphrates and menaced Antioch.[1] At news of this Gordian opened the temple of Janus (241),[3] a ceremony which seems then to have occurred for the last time, and with a

Coin commemorating the Crossing of the Hellespont by the Emperor.[2]

Sapor I.[4]

Persian Horseman.[5]

large army set out for the valley of the Danube, which the Sarmatians and Goths had been ravaging for four years;[6] the

[1] Mirkhond, *Hist. des Sassanides*, French translation by Sylvestre de Sacy, p. 288.

[2] Reverse of a medium bronze of Gordian III. with the legend *Trajectus Aug.* Gordian is seated in the prow of a prætorian galley, around which three dolphins are swimming. At the present day shoals of porpoises follow vessels in the Hellespont.

[3] Aur. Victor, *Cæs.*, 27.

[4] Engraved stone (sardonyx) of three layers, 23 millim. by 20. Pehlevi legend, of which four letters only can be clearly made out. Cf. Mordtmann, *Zeitschrift der deutsch. Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, vol. xviii. pl. vi. 4. (*Cabinet de France*, No. 1,344.)

[5] Intaglio of the Sassanid style. Perforated cone, 10 millim. in diameter. (*Cabinet de France*, No. 1,377.)

[6] The *initium belli Scythici* dates from the reigns of Maximin and Balbinus, in 238. (Capit., 16.) In this first invasion the Goths destroyed Istria, upon the Euxine.

Alani had even reached as far as the neighbourhood of Philippopolis in Thrace, where they defeated a Roman force. The barbarians could not make any stand against the large army led by Gordian, which drove away these pillagers as it passed along.[1]

In 242 the emperor crossed the Hellespont and made his way rapidly to the Euphrates.

The Persian cavalry offered no better resistance than the Goths had done, but the history of these engagements is lost. We have only a few lines in a despatch from the emperor to the senate: "After the narrative of the advantages gained by our advance, each one of which merits the honour of a triumph, we have broken the yoke already placed upon the neck of Antioch and have delivered Syria from this king and his dominion. We have restored Carrhæ and the other cities to the Empire. We are now at Nisibis and, the gods favouring, shall soon be at Ctesiphon, if they preserve to us Timesitheus, our prefect and father, who plans and conducts everything. To him we owe this success, and shall owe others yet. Therefore, vote supplications to the gods and thanks to Timesitheus." The senate decreed to the emperor a quadriga of elephants, and to the prefect a triumphal chariot drawn by four horses, with this inscription: "To the tutor of the state."[2]

Unfortunately, not long after the wise tutor died, carried off by disease or perhaps by poison which Philip had administered (243). This Philip was an Arab of Trachonitis,[3] son of a robber chief famous in that country, and for a time following his father's mode of life. Enrolled in the Roman army he rose from one grade to another until after the death of Timesitheus he was made its highest officer. Gordian appointed him to succeed the man whom he had perhaps murdered as prætorian prefect, and the operations

[1] . . . . *delevit, fugavit expulit atque submovit* (Capit., *Gord.*, 26). On the tomb of Gordian are engraved the words, *Victor Gothorum.* (*Ibid.*, 34.)

[2] Capit., *Gord.*, 27. An inscription recently discovered in Algeria gives Gordian seven imperatorial salutations. (*Bull. de corresp. afric.*, 1882, p. 119.)

[3] His name was M. Julius Philippus, and that of his wife, Marcia Otacilia Severa. See L. Renier, *Inscr. d'Alg.*, No. 2,540. According to Aurelius Victor (*Cæs.*, 28), he was born at Bostra, which is said to have been called from him Philippopolis. Ecclesiastical councils distinguish between Bostra and Philippopolis, which is said to have been built on the ruins of the former (Labbe, *Conc.*, vol. viii. pp. 644, 675). M. Waddington has discovered the ruins of Philippopolis, where are yet to be seen a theatre, an aqueduct, baths, temples, and numerous public edifices; but the wall was never completed; Philip had not time to finish his work.

against the Persians continued. A great battle gained near Resaina on the Chabaras had opened the road to the Persian capital, when suddenly a sedition broke out.

The new prefect had fomented it by intentionally disorganizing the service his predecessor had so well established. Secret orders led the supply trains astray and hindered the boats laden with provisions from reaching the camps. When Philip saw discontent springing up and growing, he employed emissaries to go about among the tents and the groups of soldiers and complain of Gordian: an emperor so young was incapable of ruling the state and commanding the army; a colleague ought to be given him who would take the place of Timesitheus. The army, impelled by famine, placed the Empire in the power of Philip, and directed that he, as tutor, should rule jointly with Gordian.[2]

Philip the Elder.[1]

The friends of the young emperor could not deceive themselves in regard to this division of authority imposed by the soldiers: it was a master set over him, and the insolent behaviour of Philip made the situation perfectly evident. They prepared a counter-revolution. When they believed themselves sufficiently in force

[1] Bust in the Louvre, not designated with certainty. (Luni marble.)
[2] Zosimus, i. 18.

they obtained a convocation of the army, as if it were a deliberative assembly. Gordian, ascending his tribunal, complained before them of the ingratitude of Philip, whom he had, he said, loaded with favours, and he asked for justice from the soldiers, that is to say, the deposition of the emperor whom they had appointed. But the opposing party were victorious, and it was Gordian who was deposed. Here Capitolinus places a scene of unworthy supplications, in which Gordian ignobly descends all the steps of power, begging first a share in the Empire, then the rank of Cæsar, or the title of prætorian prefect, lastly, the grade of *dux* and his life. We have no more reason to believe in this young man's cowardice than in his great courage; but at twenty a man does not die thus. Gordian was killed near Zaitha, the city of olive-trees, where his assassin erected to his memory a splendid tomb, which a century later was yet standing."[2] Three other emperors, Valerian, Carus, and Julian, were destined to die in these deserts.

Medal commemorative of Peace with the Persians.[1]

Philip wrote to the senate that the soldiers had chosen him emperor in the stead of Gordian, deceased by natural causes, and the senate decreed to the latter apotheosis, and to the former the imperial titles. The Conscript Fathers consoled themselves for their secret grief by granting to all the surviving members of this ill-fated family, once so prosperous, exemption from wardship, legations, and municipal burdens (*munera*). This was all that they had it in their power to give (February or March, 244).

III.—Philip (244).

Instead of prosecuting the war against the Persians, discouraged as they were by their defeat at Resaina, Philip made haste to conclude peace, on terms advantageous to them,[3] and returned to

[1] PAX FUNDATA CUM PERSIS: reverse of a silver coin of Philip the Elder.

[2] Amm. Marcellin., xxiii. 5. The government of Gordian III. had great legislative activity; the *Code* of Justinian mentions 240 ordinances of this reign. One of them is important: it granted to soldiers who had accepted, unawares, a burdensome inheritance, the advantage of being held to the payment of the debts only to the extent of the assets (*Code*, vi. 22). Hence the institution of the inventory.

[3] Eutropius, ix. 2; Zonaras, xii. 18, 19.

Antioch. Eusebius, who is disposed to represent this murderer as a Christian, says that it was related in his time[1] that Philip, wishing with the empress to celebrate Easter in Antioch, the bishop, S. Babylas, forbade them admission to the church; upon which both humiliated themselves, made public confession of their sins, and took their places among the penitents. These rumours in the end became accepted truths,[2] although it is not easy to see what interest the Church had in claiming such a proselyte. It may be that this Arab had in his youth a knowledge of the Christian religion; that, following the example of Mammæa, he had established relations with Origen,[4] and it is certain that during his reign, as during that of Alexander, the Christians enjoyed undisturbed tranquillity;[5] but all his public conduct was that of a pagan emperor. According to the legend of one of his coins, he believed that his accession had been predicted by Apollo,[6] and the medals of Otacilia Severa bear profane types,

Philip, the Empress Otacilia, and Philip the Son.[3]

[1] Ὁ λόγος κατέχει (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, vi. 34).

[2] S. Chrysostom, Orosius, and Zonaras admitted them, and S. Jerome says of Philip (*de Vir. ill.*): *qui primus de regibus rom. christ. fuit.* But these authors all lived or wrote after the penitence of Theodosius, and it was well to increase the authority of that famous example by confirming the rumours that had naturally grown up among the believers in respect to the public penitence of a whole imperial family whose toleration had caused them to be suspected of sharing in the Christian faith. At the end of the fourth century, a bishop, when that bishop was S. Ambrose, might forbid an emperor entrance to his church: a century and a half earlier no man would have dared to do it.

[3] CONCORDIA AUGUSTORUM. Busts of Philip and Otacilia, and of their son. On the reverse: EX ORACVLO APOLLINIS: a round temple with four columns, and within it a statue of Apollo. (Bronze medallion.)

[4] Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.*, vi. 33) possessed two letters written by Origen, the one to Philip, the other to the empress. But he does not say that he finds there the proof that these imperial persons were Christians.

[5] Except at Alexandria, if we may believe Eusebius (vi. 41). But this so-called persecution was probably only one of the riots so common in that city, in which Christian as well as heathen perished.

[6] *Ex oraculo Apollinis* (Cohen, iv. p. 201, No. 4; see above). He caused Gordian III. to be proclaimed *divus*, and performed all the pagan rites of the Secular Games. There

sacrilegious honours that a Christian believer would have refused. On the other hand, at that time of religious confusion many persons were uncertain what they believed. The rational syncretism of the Alexandrian philosophers became an unreasoning syncretism in many minds. Thus a singular monument, though of much later date, represents a Saint George with the head of a sparrow-hawk, that is to say, a hero of Christian legend is confused with an Egyptian god Horus.[2] The so-called Christianity of Mammæa and Otacilia was of the same nature and even more vague than this.

Reverse of a Coin of Otacilia.[1]

The events of Philip's reign are almost unknown to us. The

S. George with the Head of a Sparrow-Hawk. (Identified with Horus.)

Roman with the Head of a Sparrow-Hawk.

Augustan History from Gordian III. to Valerian, that is to say, from 244 to 253, is lost, and to fill this gap we have only the meagre or doubtful summaries of Zosimus and Zonaras, who wrote,

occurred during his reign a riot at Alexandria against the Christians, which was arrested only when civil war made a diversion. (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, vi. 41.)

[1] IVNO CONSERVATRIX. Juno veiled, holding a patera and a sceptre. (Denarius.)

[2] Cf. *Horus et S. Georges*, Memoir by M. Clermont-Ganneau in the *Revue archéol.*, 1877.

the former in the fifth century, the latter in the twelfth. They speak of a ceremony which stirred all Italy, the celebration of the Secular Games on the thousandth anniversary of the founding of Rome (248).[1] To do honour to this great occasion all the magnificence of imperial festivals was displayed, and the enthusiasm of the nations responded to the pomp of the ceremonial. The god Terminus having steadily advanced for a thousand years, the multitude might well believe that he was not now about to recede.

Coin commemorating the Thousandth Anniversary of Rome. (Reverse of a Large Bronze of Philip.)

And, in considering this constant good fortune through so large a space in the duration of humanity, the degenerate sons of old Rome allowed their poets to predict for the Empire a new millennium. But shouts of victory were about to cease: a successor of Augustus and Trajan was ere long to perish under the blows of the Goths; another was to be a captive in the hands of Sapor; and already he had been born who was to reduce the ancient queen of the world to the condition of a mere Italian town.

Aureus of Philip the Son, Cæsar and Prince of the Youth. (Cohen, No. 28.)

Philip's son (M. Julius Philippus) was but seven years of age; he made him Cæsar, and (in 247) Augustus, forgetting the fate of those imperial boys for whom the purple had been but a shroud. The emperor placed all his kindred in positions of importance. His brother Priscus commanded the army of Syria; his father-in-law (?), Severianus, that of Mœsia. He moreover treated the senators with respect, and seems to have ruled moderately, without cruelties or confiscations. However, he caused the palace of Pompey, the property of the Gordians, who had much embellished it, to come into the possession of the state. The Carpæ, a people of Getic origin, probably resident on the banks of the Pruth, had come down into the lands of the lower Danube. It appears probable that Philip went in person to expel them and made two campaigns in that war (245-6).[2] Upon his return to Rome the

[1] The thousandth year of Rome began, accepting Varro's calculation, the 21st of April, 247. The year was allowed to be completed before the games were celebrated. (Eckhel, vii. 324.)

[2] *Victoria Carpica, Carpicus Maximus*, legends on two of his coins; another, giving him

news arrived that the Syrians, exasperated by severities of Priscus, had proclaimed an emperor, Iotapianus, who called himself a

The Younger Philip. (Bust found at Civita Lavinia. Capitol, Hall of the Emperors, No. 69.)

descendant of Alexander, and that some rebels in Mœsia had proclaimed another, Marinus.[1] Philip, in much anxiety, consulted the senate. Decius, one of the members of that assembly, who knew

the title *Germanicus Maximus*, announces some victory over the Germans. (Cohen, iv. p. 202, No. 5.)

[1] We have imperial coins of two other usurpers who cannot be placed, Pacatianus and Sponsianus. The workmanship of the coins indicates the time of Philip or Decius. (Cohen, iv. pp. 229, 231, and pl. xi.)

the value of the new Augusti, announced that these mock kings would not be able to maintain themselves; and in fact they fell

Ruins of the Thermæ of the Gordians. (Photograph by Parker.)

of themselves. Philip, however, believed it useful to send to the army of the Danube the wise adviser who had so well understood the turn affairs would take. Decius long resisted, foreseeing that

these legions who, for fourteen years had made no seditious movements, would seize the first pretext to give themselves the pleasure and profit of a revolt, and so it proved; Decius had scarcely entered the camp when the soldiers saluted him emperor in spite of himself. Those who had been concerned in the late enterprise, whom Decius had been commissioned to punish, had devised this new scheme by which they would at once save themselves from chastisement and secure a *donativum*.

Coin of the Elder Philip, with the Legend: *Victoria Carpica.*

Decius wrote to his master that as soon as he should have returned to Rome he would lay aside the purple. The emperor did not credit this promise, and marched against the army of Pannonia; an engagement took place near Verona,[1] and he was defeated and slain. The prætorians left at Rome murdered his son (249): the boy was now twelve years old, and had never been seen to smile.[2]

[1] The *Chronicle of Alexandria* represents him as forty-five years of age at the time of his death. For results of the Gothic invasion, see chap. xcvi.

[2] Aur. Victor, *Cæs.*, 28. This tragedy took place early in the autumn.

Reverse of a Bronze Medal of the Two Philips and Otacilia, with the Legend: GERM(anici) MAX(imi), CARPICI MAX(imi).
Victory, standing in a Quadriga, assists Philip, Otacilia, and their Son to enter it.
(Cohen, No. 5.)

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on 18 July, 2018